

A N
Invitation
Pro: OF A ~~Person~~
SEEKER

To all those that seriously
desire to find the LORD.

Written by I. S. or the
Indefatigable SEEKER.

*Seek and you shall find. Luk. 11. 9.
I sought him, and I found him not,
Cant. 3. 1.*

*I have found him, and I will hold him.
3. 4.*

LONDON, Printed MDCLXX.



TO the READER.

Gentle Reader,

IF desire to find the Lord
moves thy spirit, I speak
to thee. If curiosity draws thee
to read, I desire thee, either to
proceed no further, or to correct thy
mind. The business of thy Soul
requires a serious thought: For
to purchase Heaven, and live eter-
nally, is a matter of high concern;
To be plunged into everlasting fire,
is a woful horror. Christ alone is
the way that leads to Happiness;
to tread any other path is to walk
in error. All error is dangerous, the
final is irremediable. Christ is all
Truth;

To the Reader.

Truth; And in him is found no falsity. Regard not what false Prophets say of Christ, for they will undervalue him. But to seek to understand aright, what he teacheth of himself, for so thy faith shall be secure and sound. I have sought with labour, I have found with pleasure; I entreat thee to enjoy both. Farewell.

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*An Invitation of a Seeker to all
those that seriously desire to
find the Lord.*

CHAP. I.

What moved the Author to become a Seeker.

SOME months ago I departed from the Court with a sad heart, having received an affront, which I never knew how to digest, nor how to revenge. I retired my self into my Chamber, and there excluding all visits, I gave scope to my fancy; which getting the reins ran disorderly from one dismal apprehension to another, till perceiving no way of remedy, I began to fear that the misery I groaned under might prove eternal. I was tossed to and fro, with

unquiet & half-raving motions, till at length I was waisted insensibly, I knew not how, to the consideration of their state, who lye chained in flames, and with fruitless tears bewail their truly eternal misery. I was surprized with horror to think that men should burn in flames for all eternity. I could not conceive, without trembling, how this flesh of mine could fry and broyl for all eternity. Wo be to the Soul, said I, that shall fall into this burning Lake, and a thousand woes to the man or woman that shall live imprisoned in this inextinguishable Fire, without hope of ever being released. And wo to me, if when I close mine eyes, I shall hear that Heaven Gates are shut, and that there is no lodging for me, but a Dungeon filled with eternal groans. The contemplation of these pains extinguished the memory of my sufferings. My Conscience warned me, that unless I looked to it, I might rue the hour that ever I was born, whereas making use of this admonition, I might for ever bless the time that I spend in seeking my souls good. Wherefore taking this to be the most important affair that can be handled in this life, I resolved to lay all other employments aside, and never cease to seek, till I had found the Lord.

CHAP. II.

The Seeker disheartned, is animated to proceed.

THe resolution was made, but no Star appeared, by which I might steer my design forward. I reflected upon the mercies of Christ, who invites all to come to him, and refuseth none that seek him; and I gave wings to my hope, that I should quickly arrive at my pretended haven. But I found lead tyed to my feet, and I advanced so slowly, that fear of not finding the Lord wounded my breast, and the wound grew deeper by the increase of new fears. My intention was to lay Faith for a ground-work, but I met with such diversity of faith, that I was gravelled at the first step. All preached Christ unto me, which I liked very well; but they were so divided among themselves, that I light upon almost as many faiths in Christ, as I dealt with men. I remembered how Christ saith, that every Kingdom divided against it self, shall be made desolate: and every City or House divided against it self shall not stand. Mat. 12. 24. How then, said I, can so many contrary faiths combine together in one to knit up a Kingdom, City or House of Christ,

seeing that division and dissention is cause of fall and ruine? I was staggered how to make them agree; and I was no less puzzled how, in the midst of such confusion, to distinguish the true from the false. I began a little to relent in the enterprize, but relying upon the comfortable words of my Saviour, *Seek and ye shall find*, Luk. 11. 9. I resolved to continue my trade of Seeking.

CHAP. III.

The Seeker searcheth the Scriptures to find the Lord.

I Could not fancy to my self, where the Jew-
 ell I sought for, might be found with
 more certainty, then in the Word of God.
 For the Lord sent the people to the *Lam and*
Sanctuary, Isa. 8. 20. Christ commands all to
search the Scriptures, Joh. 5. 39. And the men
 of Berea were daily searching the Scriptures, whe-
 ther these things were so, Acts 17. 11. There-
 fore to obey the Lord and Christ, and to imi-
 rate those, whom I looked upon as Seekers,
 I laid hold of the Bible, desirous to receive
 out of it a plenary satisfaction of the doubts
 following. First, Whether the Word of
 God did allow all the opinions, that now run
 currant,

current, or some of them onely to be true. Secondly if all, how then by the same Word of God could such contraries be linked together in one body of Truth: If some only, how many, and which they were, that I might embrace what the Word of God approved, and reject what the same Word disallowed. I grounded the hope of good success upon the words of *Paul*. *The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, and to instruct in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, instructed to every good work*, 2 Tim. 3. 16. If all things necessary to salvation be found in Scripture, I made no question but that these important points would be clearly discussed. I was eager to have the solution, whilst the doubts were yet fresh. But I knew not what Book, or what Chapter, much less what Verse to turn to. I looked upon the Bible as a long labour, if I were to read it from the beginning of *Genesis* till the end of the *Revelations*, before I could know the answer. And if I were to open it at hazard, till I light upon what should make to my purpose; the manner of searching seemed not very serious, but somewhat like to the pricking at a Lottery, where I might perchance get something, and a hundred to one, nothing. And if I should happen on a place
bear-

hearing a doubtful sense, I knew not what Rule to observe, whereby I might be assured that I understood the Text right. For I deemed it a very undecent thing, and destructive of the reverence due to God's Word, so to deal with the Bible, as Philosophers are said to do with their *Aristotle*; whose speeches they turn and wrest, as if they were made of Wax, and make him say, not what he intended, but what they please.

Whilst I thus discoursed with my self, my finger opening the Bible, directed my eye to that place, where *Peter* speaks of the Epistles of *Paul*: *Among them some things* (said he) *are hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable pervert. as they do other Scriptures also, to their own destruction,* 2 Pet. 3. 16.

This passage amazed me: For my instability being great, and my Learning small, I feared least instead of finding salvation, I might run to destruction. I knew well enough that the Prophets are obscure and dark, that *Ezekiel*, *Daniel* and the *Revelations* are full of profound & sublime mysteries, not to be interpreted but by learned men only: but that *Paul's* Epistles should be hard to be understood, was a doctrine that I never heard of before. That the unlearned pervert them, and not only them, but other more easie Scriptures also,

also, may well terrifie those, from reading the Bible, who have no more Learning in them, then to be able to read English currently. For if Scripture, that is medicinal, when it is perverted, becomes venomous, no wonder if the ignorant suck diseases and ruine from the same flower, that affords health and good substance to the man that is knowing.

I was moved with curiosity to see *Paul* himself, but it ended in a new trouble. For I chanced upon a place to the *Corinthians*, where *Paul* layes down at large divers gifts, administrations, and operations of wisdom, knowledge, &c. amongst which he numbers *interpretation of Speeches or Scriptures*; and saith, that they are not bestowed upon every one, but some upon one, some upon another, as the Spirit will. Whilst I staid and paused, not knowing well what to make of it, I turned the leaf again, and met with this other place: *the Letter killeth, the Spirit giveth life*, 2 Cor. 3. 6. This put me into a new plunge: For conferring these Texts together, I was not a little disquieted in mind.

At length I said to my self: if the Letter killeth when the ignorant reads, why am I that am unlearned commanded to search the Scriptures. If the Spirit only give life, why is this spirit given to some onely, and not to all?

all? Why is it not given to every one that desires to have it? Why to them onely to whom the Spirit will, and not to all them, who at any time have a will to receive life by reading the Scriptures? if without this Spirit my reading is dead, and if the Lord bestow not this Spirit upon me, then although I toss and tumble the Scriptures, yet I do but fish in the dark with them, *that laboured all night and caught nothing*, Luk. 5. 5. My heart fainted, and I began to despair, yet not to be wanting to my self, I turned to above forty or fifty, or more places in the Bible, continuing the same diligence for some dayes together, and still I found much to confound me, little to further me, nothing at all that served directly to solve my doubts. And at this very day I should be highly obliged to that man, who having the Bible at his fingers end, could shew me any one place where the aforesaid points; that so nearly concern our Soul, are propounded, discussed and resolved. I, for my part, after a long weary search, concluded absolutely that the holy Scripture is the Sea, of which *Ezek.* speaks, *Chap. 47. vers. 3. 4. 5.* which I thinking to wade over, was at first step up to the Ankles, at the next above the Knees, then up to the Reins and Armpits. At length I discovered an Ocean so vast, that a tall Ship would hardly

hardly pass it without danger, and much less I that had not so much as a small Cock-boat. Melancholly frights and fears turmoyled my mind, because reading the Bible, and searching the Scriptures, the more I sought the farther off I was from finding. This made me sigh, and breath, quake, and tremble, for fear lest my soul should miscarry in the midst of divine helps.

CHAP. IV.

The Seeker is present at a Conference of Religion.

MY breast being somewhat streightned by this interior conflict, I walked forth into the Fields to take the fresh air, where I met with a Friend, who invited me to a spiritual conference, where I should hear things of Religion Learnedly handled. This revived my dull spirits, and I seemed rather to fly, then to walk thither. We came into a handsome Room well furnished, where three Gentlemen, a Lady, and her Kinswoman sat modestly discoursing together. They rose up at our arrival, and very civilly admitted us to take place among them. I entreated that

that our presence might not disturb their pious entertainment. One of them turning himself to me, said : We are met here to deliberate upon the high concern of our Souls, and to determine what Religion ought to be held to secure our Salvation. I replied, that it was the only thing I sought after, and that I desired nothing more, then to hear what their wisdoms would resolve upon. Then said he that sat over against me : We have just now unanimously concluded by evident Reasons drawn out of the Bible, that Idolatry is abominable before the face of the Lord; and therefore that the Papist Religion, which is founded in Idolatry, is so certainly false, that not so much as an ear ought to be given to it. I agree with you in that (said I) and do hold that Popery is to be shut out of our deliberation. Because I could never brook that men should be saved by their own merits, as though Christ had not dyed for us : Or that any man should prefer the Virgin *Mary* before God; or that people should be so superstitiously addicted to Ceremonies, as to neglect the main substance. This declaration pleased them all, and therefore he that sat on my right hand, began in this manner.

CHAP. V.

Faith alone is sufficient to save you.

VWhoever desires to enter into a short and secure way to Heaven, let him onely have faith in Jesus Christ, and he shall infallibly be one of the Elect. *For all the chosen are regenerated by faith*, Rom. 3. 25. And his salvation is certain; *For, He that shall believe, and be baptized, shall be saved*, Mar. 16. 16. Christ reprehends the Apostles *for want of faith*, Mar. 4. 40. and Paul exhorteth all to be stedfast in Faith, 1 Cor. 15. 12. The reason is evident; because, whosoever hath faith alone, shall have all the things following. He shall first of all have remission of sins, Acts 10. 43. Secondly, He shall live, Hab. 2. 4. Thirdly, His heart shall be pure. Act. 15. 9. Fourthly, All things shall be possible unto him, Mar. 9. 23. Fifthly, Those that are justified by faith, are at peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. Christ commands such to fear nothing. *Be not afraid, onely believe*, Mar. 5. 36. On the other side without faith, it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. It is evidently demonstrated from hence,

hence, and such like innumerable places of the Bible, that faith alone is sufficient to salvation; and that nothing else is required. He that sat next him replied immediately.

CHAP. VI.

Live well, and it matters not what Religion you live in.

IF this opinion of sole faith were justifiable in the whole latitude, in which it is proposed, it would undermine my principles, and make all that I have to say, fall to the ground. But I am too strongly rooted in the Word of God, to be shaken with such weak blasts. I grant that you must believe, and that faith is necessary. But I say, that besides faith, you must also live well, or else you will never get to heaven. My reason is taken out of the Bible : *Faith if it have not works, is dead in it self*, Jam. 2. 17. *The Devils believe, and tremble*, vers. 19. It were a strange Doctrine to say that a dead Faith, or an Apostate angel should ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Again, *Every man shall receive according to his works*, Rev. 22. 12. And Christ at the counting day, will not say ;

say : *Come ye blessed*, because you did believe, but *because ye fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked*, and did such like works of mercy, *Mat. 25. 35.* Besides, *Paul* dilating himself at large upon this subject, concludes, that although you have never so much faith, and in never so great perfection, as even to be able to remove mountains, yet if you have not Charity, it will avail you nothing, *1 Cor. 13. per tot.*

This being so, I hold it frivolous to be nice in choosing any Religion. I would have every one be constant in the Religion he was first brought up in, and bend all his care, not to seek another, but to live uprightly, well and justly in his own : Christ looks upon the heart. He regards not in what Religion you live, but is wholly attent to what, and how you work. Thus I extend charity, whilst I admit that men in all Religions may be saved, if they live well. It is against Christian duty to say that a man shall be damned merely because he is not of such an express Religion; and because he is forsooth of that Religion, although he live never so loosely, yet he may be saved. Christ commands us not to judge our neighbour, yet this Religion, condemns people to Hell, without seeing their hearts.

The Gentlewoman, with a smiling dislike mixed with female gravity, not being able to contain her self any longer, broke out into these words.

CHAP. VII.

Predestination makes all Religions vain.

I Will not examine the latter part of your discourse, which tends onely to delude the world with the mask of Religion. If I were disposed to maintain a Religion, I could answer you, that your doctrine would sure better with the times that flourished in the Law of Nature, then with these dayes, in which the Law of Grace gives life to believers. Because Grace (as these hold) is the soul of faith, and unless the works of faith be animated with this soul, they are dead. Now remember what you your self said of a dead faith. Moreover, I could tell you, that the primitive faithful had *but one Soul*. Act. 4. 32. that is, they had but one only vivifying grace, and consequently but one faith. Now diversity, contrariety and falsity of Religions must needs spring from diversity, contrariety and falsity of faiths. And if your charity extend it self to save all those that work well with any faith in any Religion
what-

whatsoever, it must of necessity embrace all those that work well with a false erroneous or impious faith. You might as well dilate your charitable bowels a little more, and include also a natural faith, and so make Heathens, Turks and Jews, that live well, to be of the elect and chosen people of the Lord. But let them that are fond of Religion answer for themselves. I, at present, have against the first part of your opinion, and say that it hath no substance; because it layes a supposition repugnant to evident Texts of Scripture. When you ground your Religion upon your good works, you suppose that man hath Free-will, and so you make your count without your Host. By which you shew, that you are ignorant in the fundamentals of Religion, otherwise you would have noted how often, and how clearly the Word of God speaks against you. Hearken, I pray; *All in all things Gad doth work*, Eph. i. 11. *All our works O Lord, thou hast wrought to us*, Isa. 26. 12. *I know O Lord, that mans way is not in his hands, nor in his power to direct his steps*, Jer. 10. 23. *And there is no evil in the City, which the Lord hath not done*, Amos 3. 6. *Because as clay in the hand of the Potter, to order it at his pleasure, so are we in the hands of the Lord, that he may reward them, as liketh him best*, Eccles. 33. 12. You

see how plain the Scripture speaketh. As the clay worketh nothing, nor can make it self a vessel of honour or wrath, but wholly depends of the Potter; So man can concur nothing to his own good or evil deeds, but works them all in and by Christ, as Christ himself testifies. *Without me you can do nothing*, Job. 15. 5. Therefore all good and evil is from Christ alone, and nothing at all from man. For I argue thus: Either man by strength of Free-will can do something, or nothing: If something, though never so little, then Christ doth not say true: if nothing, then to what purpose do we labour to do good works, which are not in our power, but in Gods hand alone.

Wherefore we may leave off to search any further into the thing call'd Religion: For every one of us is either Predestinat, or Re-probat. He that is Predestinat, let him not care what life he lives, for he shall certainly go to Heaven, because he is one of the Elect. But he that is already made Reprobate, let him live as well as he will, and do as many good works as he please, he shall notwithstanding be as certainly damned, as it is impossible for a reprobate to be saved. Therefore let every one live merrily, and make the best use of his time that he can, and in the end take the doom which God has prepared for him.

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The third Gentleman, shewing unwillingness to offend her, turned himself to me, and said,

CHAP. VIII.

Change your Religion as the time changeth.

PRedestination is a point of great subtilty, which this Gentlewoman comprehends not; for she neither makes it cohere in it self, nor doth rightly deduce it. I have heard it discussed by choice wits, who proved evidently out of *Paul*, and other Scriptures, that it doth not hinder or hurt man's liberty. Because, as I remember, some of them held, that Predestination, is an act in God, which follows another act in the divine understanding, that sees all our good works. So that God first sees a man's good works, and then doth predestinate him: And he doth never predestinate any man before he hath seen his final good works. Insomuch, as the actual working well hath some priority to the act of Predestination: So that if you actually work well finally, you shall be saved; if not, you shall be reprobate. Not well; first, said they, God decrees to save every man:

For he will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4. Then he decrees to give to every one, some divine help that may conduct him to Heaven : Then he sees who will lay hold of such a help, and who will not ; who goes forward concurring with divine favours, and who cuts them off ; who perseveres to the end in good, and who fails in the closing of life. These decrees (said they) are altogether in the same instant of Eternity, but with a certain priority and distinction in signs. I did not understand them perfectly, but I perceived that they concluded, that our finall working well is precedent, and that God's predestinating is subsequent ; and that these acts agree as well together, as doth the Wages with the VVorkman or the Lawrel with the Conquerour. Others explicated Predestination another way, but all did consent that Free-will is in no wise endamaged by it, but preserved entire.

In the time of this Dispute, one of the Doctors rose up, and turning himself to the multitude, that stood gaping to hear them, said with a loud voice : This matter is sublime, and requires deeper speculation, then is commonly found in people, that have only a superficial knowledge. Certain persons, who want the grounds, that cost Learned men

men many years labour before they could rightly understand and possess them, do boggle and falter, and stumble at the contemplation of this profound mystery. They would sooner save their Souls by hearkening humbly, then by a daring flight above their capacity. But let us leave this arguing to great Doctors, and let us speak in plain terms, more easie to be understood.

Madam, in the sense that you alledge the opinion, it cannot stand with God's Justice, and it doth destroy his Goodness. The Bible is full of Gods tender love towards man. It is not love, but an effect of hate, to decree mans eternal torment without any cause given by man. It is not justice, but cruelty to condemn man to eternal death, for that which God himself forced him to do. Wherefore if God be good and just, the reason why man is predestinat, or reprobate, must come from man working, not from God forcing. This truth is so often repeated in the Bible, that whatsoever the opinions of School-men may be, concerning the manner of explicating Predestination, it is consonant to the sweet and just proceeding of the Lord, that man be either saved or damned for his own good or evil deeds. Besides, you contradict your self: For first you affirm, that man hath no Free-will, and then you

add very inconsequently, that he may live as well as he will, and do as many good works as he please, exhorting him at length to live merrily, and to make the best use of his time that he can. You ought rather to have said, that the Lord may do in him, and with him, what he will and what he please; and then have entreated the Lord to make him merry, and grant him a cheerful use of his time. But you desire a poor man to do, what immediately before you laboured to perswade him was impossible to be done. In which your tongue doth naturally bewray the ignorance you have of the mystery.

Upon man's freedom I plant my Religion: Free-will is a most noble excellency, that distinguisheth man from brute beasts and gives him ample scope to exercise the power, that is proper to his divine extraction. Wherefore seeing that nothing is more contrary to the dignity of man, than to be ryed and bound to a Religion; and nothing is more agreeable to his nature, then to do and undo; to take and refuse; to put on and put off; to change and alter at his pleasure; I conclude that every man ought to embrace the Religion as it runs current in the times. It is a great art to sail with any wind, and it is no less wisdom to walk to heaven in any Religion. As the Religion grow old, stale, out
of

of date, or fashion, why should our will be compelled to wear what others cast off? If the Religion it self change, how can we and the Religion agree together, unless we frame our dictamens to the Religions humour? He would have spoken more; but the Lady took him up short, with a quick motion both of tongue and body, and delivered her mind thus.

CHAP. IX.

Let not your Religion soar above Reason.

YOU talk of Religion, as if it were an idle invention. You compare it to the fashion, which is altered at the fickleness of a fancy, which no man is obliged to follow, and every one may change at his pleasure. This is contrary to the strain of former ages, when Christians stuck so close to their faith, that rather than forgo it, they were content to hazzard their lives and fortunes, and by such constancy Heaven was peopled with Martyrs. Although for my part, this dying to maintain my belief, or this losing my means to secure my conscience, I confess it is a doctrine which the Spirit hath not yet taught me. And you must know that the Spirit

spirit teacheth all truth. And although I say it, I am as well versed in the spirit, as any other whatsoever of my years: For I have made it my only study from my infancy to understand the Bible perfectly well. Now what should instruct man, but the spirit of man? And what is mans spirit but that, by which he lives? As I cannot live by your spirit, nor you by mine, so neither of us can understand what the Spirit of the Lord speaks to our neighbour. It is not the outward preaching that doth the deed; it is the spirit that moves. If you preach, and I attend not, all that you say is vain babbling. The spirit must inform, and it must inform according to my capacity. I cannot be obliged to believe more, than my spirit is able to direct me. Nor can my spirit make me comprehend more, then what my forces arrive to. The spirit, reason, and my forces are all the same. It were inconsistent with mans nature to require from him a belief, that should transcend his forces, or exceed the reach of his reason. Believe therefore as much, and as far as reason leads you. The Will is a blind power, and sees no more then what Reason dictates. You cannot without violence cast her into shackles, when reason repugnes.

My judgement is, that he were unreasonable,

able, that would have a man imbrace a Religion above his reason, or captivate his understanding to impossibilities. The holy Scripture doth often inculcat this doctrine unto us, Harken how expressly. *My Command is not hidden from thee, nor is far off; It is not in Heaven, neither is it beyond the Sea, but it is near thee, and in thy heart, Deut. 30. 11.* Whosoever hath the Spirit of the Lord sees plainly, that thou art not commanded to believe things above thy capacity, or beyond thy reach, but such onely as are within the compass of thy power. And to go no further; what do we pretend at present, but onely to shew who hath the best reason for his Religion, and who hath the strongest arguments to maintain it, provided that all be confirmed by the Word of God. I have no thought of drawing you to me, unless Reason convince you. And I do not see, why I should come to any of you, unless the strength of Argument forces me. Therefore, seeing every one hath briefly laid open his mind, let us try what mental our wits and tongues are made of.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Conference is interrupted.

THis speech was received with applause, and the dispute began with modest proposals, and quiet replies; but by little and little it grew warm. Contrary opinions could never meet, without clashing Reason opposed Reason, Authority faced Authority, and Scripture fought against Scripture. Every one pretended to have the Word of God clear for himself, and made whole troops of Scripture march up in his own favour, but they were alwayes beaten back by other forcible Scriptures. In this part the Women out did the Men. The young Lady was so nimble at it, that she seemed rather to speak Scripture, then cite it. Which she did with so good a grace, with so handson a delivery, and with so free a spirit, that if *Paul* had not commanded Women not to teach, I would give her my vote to be preferred to the first Chair of the University.

My Friend, that introduced me, had hitherto been silent, when on the suddain he changed colour and countenance, declaring by his

his extotick motions and gestures, that some internal impulse gave him more then humane authority to speak. Your spirits (said he) jarre among themselves. The Spirit of the Lord takes possession of my tongue, commanding me to preach, and you to hear uncontrollable verities. We all turned towards him with amazement, expecting with reverence what the voice of this new spirit would deliver. He began thus:

CHAP. XI.

Honour the Lord alone, and live by pure spirit.

ALL good Religions seek to honour the Lord. Consequently that Religion must be the best, which honours the Lord most. All honour and glory ought to be given to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. No creature is to be admitted to partake with him in a point, wherein he is so jealous, that he promiseth *not to give his honour to any other.* Esa. 42. 8. Do not injure the Lord, or violate nature. That honour is stolen from the Lord, which is given to graven images. Fly Idolatry; or to Angels and Saints, who neither see you, nor hear you, nor know not you. O fly, fly Idolatry: Or to mortal men,
who

who by Natures rule are no more then your equals. Will you still retain and practise prophane Idolatry? Capping, bowing, kneeling and the like, are meer humane inventions, they were heretofore given to Idols, and do yet smell of abomination and superstition. I hope that the friends of the Lord, as they are zealous in their mind to detest, So they will be efficacious in their carriage to abolish the rags of Idolatry.

O Dearest Brethren and Sisters, Adore, I command you in spirit and truth. To adore in spirit excludes all corporal superfluities, as gold in its purity admits no dross. To adore in truth, is to banish from the heart the worlds falsity, which consists chiefly in lying, cheating, consening, and the like. Behold how palpably that Religion exceeds the rest, which having been lately found out by certain illuminated persons, walks in the way of pure spirit. It is a Religion that doth so excellently well refine our lives, that we arrive to have our Yea, yea; and our nay, nay: that we come not to retain falsity in our buying and selling, no duplicity in our words, no deceit in our actions. It is so elevated in spirit, that it regards not the body; it is so entirely addicted to honour the Lord, that it disdains to stoop so low, as to bow to a creature. It is so solicitous to be vested
with

with the life of Jesus Christ, that as the Apostles did rejoyce in suffering for the truth of the Gospel, so it doth glory that it is persecuted by the children of the blind world for the fervour of preaching. O Men and Women, that pretend to save your Souls, love the Spirit, not the Body: follow interior feelings, not corporal senses: Rise up to a pitch of perfection, that may feed the soul, and be ashamed to tast of the dregs of iniquity, presented unto you in the foul cup, which useth to be carowed by worldlings. O raise your hearts to the freedom of the Children of Jesus Christ, and exempt your selves from the thralldom of Satan. O! all you that hear me, attend to the spirit that speaks. Fly sin, and you shall be happy. Purifie your minds, and you shall see the Lord. Take heed, beware, look to it. If you be tainted or spotted, you shall be thrown from the face of the Lord. Every light action, every impertinent smile, or vain thought may be your eternal ruine. Every slip is a downfall, every stumble a precipice, and every cast of an unbridled eye casts you into eternal fire. If your Eye offend you, if your Foot scandalize you, pluck it out, cut it off, and away with it. For if you step aside, or look awry, or think amiss, hope not for Heaven. One single error, imperfection or defect,

defect, though never so slender, light, or small, damns you eternally. Unless you live as free from sin, and as perfect as is your eternal Father, you are lost Children forever.

He said much more to the same purpose, which made us all astonished, and no man knew on the sudden what to reply.

The day being far spent, and time wanting to discuss this matter, we resolved to have another meeting at the first convenience.

CHAP. XII.

What the Seeker did after the Conference.

I Retired home with my head full of confusion; with a combat in my brains, with a disorder in all my powers. Sleep fled from mine eyes, and I revolved in my mind what had passed, but was not able to judge of it; nor to approve or disapprove any thing. All seemed probable, yet nothing pleased. Every opinion singly by it self carried a face of truth with it, but compared to others, lost its varnish. It was a paradox to me, that every one should prove his opinion by plain and clear Scripture, and that every one again should be confuted by evident

dent Scripture. I could think no otherwise of it, but that either Scripture was contrary to it self, which I could not beleive, seeing the holy Ghost was the author of it, or else that the places cited by them were not rightly understood. Which if so, I knew not what to do, nor whither to go, nor to whom to repair, that I might have the true meaning of it. Then I began to consider this new Religion, which if it should chance to prove the true one, I did not see how it is possible for a man to laugh any more, or to be merry, or to hope salvation, and not despair: For who can live with the exact rigor which this Religion requires? At length there occurred to my mind a good honest Protestant Gentleman, whose counsel I might ask; and with the quiet of this thought I began to repose.

CHAP. XIII.

A reflection upon every one of the aforesaid opinions.

I Went early the next morning to a Gentleman, who although he be one that loves his ease, yet he is of a singular good judgement. I recounted unto him the whole state

Of my soul, with all the passages as I have now related them. He smiled upon me, and pittied my case, but remitted me for further instruction to an acquaintance of his. I pressed him hard, that he would at least give me his opinion touching the conference. Thus then (said he) in brief to every one of them.

To the first. If faith alone be sufficient, then clear it is that good works are superfluous. But if faith without works be dead, and profit nothing, then either *James*, *Matthew* and *Paul*, must be dashed out of the Bible, or the former opinion must needs fall.

To the second. If all that live well shall be saved, and it be charity to hold so: I do not see why all that live ill, should not be pardoned, and why it should not be charity to hold so. If salvation or pardon depend upon your holding the opinion, I beseech you to hold it. But if they depend upon Christ, your holding or not holding the opinion, will avail little, unless you hold with Christ. To live well in a Religion is like the walking well of a Traveller. To walk strong is excellent good, as long as you are in the right way. But as soon as you once step out of it, your walking well will never bring you to your journey's end. He doth kindly, and
like

like a friend, that endeavours to put you in again, And if any one under pretence of charity, should sooth you up with a persuasion, that it matters not what way you go, so you walk with strength; you would give him small thanks for his charity, when at the dais end you find your error without remedy, and then you would perhaps remember that they did not say ill, who told you beforehand, that you would repent your self too late. In the same manner, it is the part of a good Christain to admonish you of your error, when you walk in a Religion that was never trodden by Christ or his followers. And if you consider the thing well, you have no reason to charge them with uncharitable affection, who groundedly urge you to prevent the danger of falling into the company of those, who in the day of Judgement shall with bitter, but barren grief cry out: *We have strayed from the way of truth: the sun of understanding hath not risen unto us: and the way of the Lord we never knew*, Wilsd. 5. 6.

To the third. To have no Religion, is to take away the fruit of Christs Passion. His sufferings would be in vain, the preaching of the Apostles frustrate, all divine promises and threats to no purpose. If we have no liberty to execute, we have no reason to

regard what is commanded. If necessity force us, it is senseless that Justice should chastise us; more senseless it is to lay indiscretion to Gods charge, for commanding us to *work our Salvation*, and to *work till he comes*, Luk. 19. 13. Because this Command would be impossible or frivolous. For it is either given to all, or to the chosen only: If to all, it is impossible, because the Reprobat cannot work their salvation. If to the chosen only, it is frivolous, because before they work, or whether they work or no, they are sure to be saved.

To the fourth. To make my Religion a Weather-cock, that may be turned with the blast of any sick brain, is to destroy the principles of wisdom. Prudence useth to be stayed, sober and constant, which qualities are wanting to a faith that wavers. By preaching to Ethnieks and Gentils, you may perhaps gain them, but you shall not have the laudability of conserving them; if you make it lawful for them to serve the times, and suck the corruption of every depraved age. This fickleness, and mutability cannot challenge to it self the denomination of persevering to the end, and therefore cannot deserve to expect the reward due to a Perseverance.

The fifth opinion, which takes Reason for the rule of Faith, and will not bow to an autho-

authority that towereth above her capacity, hath much of that haughty spirit, that pretended to raise his throne above the Heavens, and equalize the Highest. He that will not stoop to the Majesty of Gods Authority speaking, presumes to erect his crest above the clouds. Who can comprehend that God is one alone in three Persons? that he created all things of nothing? that the second Person (not the first or third) was made man in one Person and two Natures? that God should be born of a Virgin, suffer, and dye? that a Man shall come to examine and judge all the thoughts, words, and actions of the whole progeny of *Adam*? and that he shall pronounce an irrevocable Sentence of eternal life, and eternal death? A Bart cannot gaze upon the Sun. much less can the weak eyes of Reason fix their view upon the rayes of these supercelestial mysteries. The office of reason is not to dive into the Divine secrets, but to search out convincing arguments, that may evidently prove the credibility of Gods speaking. Which done, Reason ceaseth; and there ariseth in the will a strict obligation to command a firm belief of the mysteries revealed by Gods speaking, because God, if he speak, must of necessity say true. So that Reason, like a Gentleman-usher, leads the Will up to the door of the

Presence-chamber, and then retires. After which, the Will leaning no longer upon Reason, changeth arms, and relies her faith upon the certainty that God speaks, and the evidence, that he cannot lye. But these things are out of my road.

The last opinion, because it is new, will not want followers. Apprentices, Serving-men, and Waiting-maids, I warrant you, will flock to it: For this Religion makes them at first step equal to their Master, and gives them a friendly leave to sit down with their Mistress, One degree more will make the purse common, and perhaps the most needy will grow the most perfect. Some knavish wit feeling the sweet of enjoying other men's labors, may be an easie contemplation bring forth another Religion, which may give him courage to keep what this Religion helps him to get. And then he that is now scrupulous in buying and selling, will swallow down the scruple, if you talk of restoring.

To the essential point of this Religion, I say, that no man can honour another unless he do abase himself. And he honours the Lord most, that is most vilified in his own sight. Humility hath an eye that can see no good, but evil in it self, and on the contrary can discern no evil, but good in others. And therefore she being desirous that every
thing

thing may stand in its proper place, rejoyceth to be put in the lowest. Pride and *Lucifer* joyn hands together. You need no greater sign to know a proud man, then to see that he will not stoop : He refuseth to bow, because he feels something in himself that suggests unto him that he is superiour, or at least equal to others, This motion hath no divine savour in it : For the Spirit of Jesus Christ teacheth you to bow to the meanest ; the spirit of *Lucifer* will not have you stoop to the highest.

As for the honour given to Images, Saints or Angels, I know there is much tugging about it. It ought to be decided by the Word of God, which I wil not venture to do ; because whatsoever conceit, they who read the Bible may have of themselves. I dare not presume to be more, then were the Apostles before Christs Resurrection, who were not able to understand the Scriptures (although they were able to read them in their mother tongue) until Christ had opened their understanding, and the sense or meaning of them, Luk. 24. 25.

The last part of this opinion being spoken to an Auditory, that holds no third place between Heaven and Hell, doth very well to inculcate damnation to all those that commit the smallest sins : For seeing it is cer-

tain that no sin, how little soever it be, can enter into heaven, *Revel. 21. 27.* it is clear in their principles, that both the sin and the sinner must go down into hell.

With your good patience, I will tell you a reflection I use to make upon this point,

CHAP. XIV.

How he ought to live that denies Purgatory, and what is to be said of him that believes it.

I Will not dispute, whether or no there be such a place as some call Purgatory. I only say that whosoever denies it, obligeth himself to carry a heavy burden, whereas it is certain, that *The yoke of Christ is sweet, and his burthen is light*, *Matt. 11. 30.* Mark now. The Word of God saith in many places, that there is a distinction between sins and sins, that some are greater, some are less. *John* saith that *there is a sin to death, and a sin not to death*, *1 John 5. 16.* Christ saith that *some sins are guilty of a Council, others of Judgement, and others of Hell*, *Matt. 5. 23.* But he that denies Purgatory, sayes that all sins whatsoever they be, are sins to death, hell and damnation. And therefore
he

he by his own tenets must of necessity oblige himself, for every sin that he committeth, how light soever it be, to be liable to eternal torment. This is a hard task: It is hard, and so hard, that it brings the hope of salvation into a very narrow compass: For it is morally impossible that a man vested with corruptibility should conserve himself any long time from falling into some sin or other, seeing *the just man falls seven times a day*, Prov. 24. 16. We know well enough, that as long as we live in this mortal life, we are surrounded with enemies, that we have traitors in our bowells, that we tread upon snares, and cannot breath without danger: we know that our tongue, our eyes, and our senses; that our body, our flesh, and our appetites; that our very soul, and the better part of us conspire joyntly, and severally against us to defile us, to entrap and ruine us. Yet he that will admit no third place between Heaven and Hell, must necessarily professe to have Hell for his eternal habitation, if in the midst of all these assaults, he doth not guard his interior as free from all spot, scar, wound or blemish, as is the eternal Father. This opinion cannot be proposed without horror, nor imbraced with prudent hope, because it makes our life unsupportably tedious, and our salvation impossible in practise:

For

For he that cleaves to this opinion, doth very imprudently hope to be saved, unless he resolve to renounce the use of his senses, to make a divorce between his will and his appetites; to retire himself wholly from the company of men, and there live abstracted from all fancies, thoughts and desires. He that doth this, doth something; but it is not sufficient, unless at his departure, he leave himself behind him: For when he lies upon his death bed, deprived of sense, and almost of strength, he shall be encompassed with thousands of temptations, both within and without; from above and from beneath, and from all sides: Yet this man makes it an article of his faith, that the day is lost, and that his Salvation is desperate, if Satan can but touch him with a sting, though the venom passe not to his heart. Can a man believe this to be true, and yet live without innumerable anxieties, or die without immense fears?

They who believe there is a Purgatory, live with fewer frights, and dye with greater hopes. Because it is far easier to preserve themselves from gross and palpable sins, as blasphemy, adultery, drunkenness, and the like, which are *sins to death*, then from the innumerable darts of subtle temptations, which are shot from invisible ambushes, but make
not

not impression of mortal harm, by reason that they cause *sins only that are not to death*. And when they are brought to their last Agony, besides the manifold helps they have to keep Satan aloof, it is a comfort to know that the wound is not so deep, nor the cure so hard, when the shaft of temptation scarce razeth the skin, when as it pierceth the entrails: and therefore, although in that last and dreadful combat, which Satan is permitted to give with all his forces, they should receive some slight wound, yet as long as they live in Christ, they have hopes to have their wounds healed, and their triumph secure. For as it were cruelty to carry maimed, bruised, or wounded bodies to the Grave, and not to the Hospital; So it were little agreeable to the sweetness of Christ's love, that souls not yet dead to him, but still living by the vertue of his Merits, should be unmercifully buried in Hell, and not rather charitably carried to a place, where they might receive cure. They who believe there is a Purgatory, do not hold it of their own brains, but they cite for it many places out of the Bible. This one at present occurs to my memory. *The filth of the daughters of Sion must be washed away by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning*, Isa. 4.4.

By the *Daughters of Sion*, are understood the Elect, who being otherwise beautiful, have

have notwithstanding contracted the filth of such sins as are not to death. But because they are sins, the Sentence shall pass against them by the spirit of judgement, confining them to the spirit of fire: Yet because they were not sins to death, they shall not be confined to the fire that burns eternally without purging or cleansing, but to a fire, by whose spirit of burning the filth must be washed away.

I have been free with you to open my sense concerning the foresaid opinions: I pray tell me with the same freedom what you think of it. To whom I replied.

CHAP. XV.

Religion seems nothing else but a probable opinion.

I Have been very attent to all that you have said, and it seems to me that it is conformable to reason, and that it carries with it a great probability. It makes me incline to the opinion of some others, that I have heard of; that Religion is nothing else but a probable opinion. And therefore seeing a man may with a safe conscience follow any probable opinion, I begin to think that it may be lawful for me to imbrace any Religion,

gion, seeing every Religion aleageth great probabilities for it self : And you have now brought a probable proof for Purgatory , which I alwayes thought to be a cheating invention.

The word was scarce out of my mouth , but he replied. I perceive that multiplicity of opinions hath troubled your judgement. I do not wonder at it, because I was once of the same opinion, but by the help of others I have learned , that the true Religion must be more than probable , otherwise it could never oblige under the pain of eternal damnation. As for all other Religions, I dare engage that a learned man, maliciously bent to deprave the Bible , would invent twenty a day, as good as any of these, which malice or ignorance hath already brought forth : And he would maintain them by probabilities grounded on the Word of God. Let any indifferent man or woman judge whether any of the Religions that are not yet born , or that few years ago came first to light, may prudently be held to be the Religion, which sixteen Ages past, Christ founded. By your good leave I will insist a little more fully upon this point : For although it may seem to be more then is convenient for this short discourse, yet it will not be more, then is good for you to know.

CHAP. XVI.

A probable Religion is no Religion.

THE Lord having said in the Old Testament that all should perish by water, that were not in the Ark of *Noah*, no probabilities could make any man secure, that he might escape in some other Bark, or upon the top of some House, Tree or Mountain. And whosoever laughed at *Noah* for his uncharitable preaching of such a Doctrine, found afterwards by his own sad experience, that all safety consists in believing and obeying God, and not in relying upon humane probabilities. So Christ having said in the New Testament, that *He is the door* Joh. 10. 9. it is not prudent for any man to live, much less to dye, with a probability that he may enter into Heaven at another gate, then by Christ and his Religion. For as drowning was inevitable to all those that were out of the Ark, so because Christ is all Truth, damnation must of necessity light upon all those that are out of Christs Religion.

The sincere Seeker must ground his search upon this principle : *Out of Christs Religion there is no salvation.* Then he must examine Religion

Religion, as wise men do Jewels. A probability onely that a Diamond is true, doth not invite men to buy, but rather holds them from bargaining. It is imprudence to part with your money, as long as you fear you may be deceived; and as great imprudence it is, to lay down your fear, unless you be certain of the goodness of the ware. Probability includes alwayes a fear of falsity, and this fear cannot prudently cease, till certainty of truth be discovered: For he that is not secure, must needs be timorous. This I say, not to him that builds his security upon the hate of trouble, nor to him that cleaves to his opinion, not because he hath reason for it, but because he will not be moved from it, but I say it to him that is serious in the pursuit of his eternal welfare. I say, that although he have all the probabilities that Wit and Art can invent, yet until he be certain that he is in the true Religion, no discourse or argument, no authority or reason, no search or diligence shall ever be able so to quiet his Conscience, that he shall not every now and then, hear some importune and secret whisper of doubting, that he is not in the right. The which at the hour of his death will clamour, not in his praise for working probably, but to his confusion, for believing imprudently. Nothing but certainty and infallibility can give

give ground sufficient to draw a consequence that may make the imbracing of a Religion, upon which depends eternal joy or wo, without blame securely practical. That you may see that I speak this groundedly, take this advertisement with you.

CHAP. XVII.

Grounds concerning probable opinions.

NOte First. No moral matter can possibly be proposed, which hath not some good and some ill in it, as well for the affirmative part, as for the negative.

Note Secondly. Every moral and practical case may be considered two ways: First, as it is meerly and simply the case proposed; Secondly, as it is conjoynd with some secret principle, which every one according to the diversity of circumstances in which he is, ought to prescribe unto himself for the rule of his actions. In the first sense, whatsoever can be proposed, may easily be made probable by any man that hath a natural wit, or some moderate extent in learning. In the second sense, infinite probabilities fall to the ground, and he must be a man of more then ordinary

ordinary knowledge and experience, that can secure the conscience in the practical following of a probable opinion.

Note thirdly. To understand this well, that *Synderesis* is a habit that conserves these two general principles: *Avoid evil, and do good.* The right practise of this habit, is a most efficacious help to perfection, the wrong use thereof is the bane of Conscience: For if you streighten it, you lead to scruples; if you enlarge it, you open a gap to liberty: and if you extinguish it, all shame of sinning is lost, and iniquity is drunk up like water. Wherefore it requires a skilful director, so to lead a Soul, that neither the habit be hurt, nor the Conscience wounded.

Upon this habit, men that work with discretion and fore-sight, lay some other general principle, by which they level the mediat ends of their particular actions. Who-soever takes any voluntary obligation upon himself, or hath any imposed upon him by another, is bound by vertue of the same obligation to establish in his mind some axiom or maxim suitable to the matter. Upon which maxim or principle if he look, contrary probabilities will little move him; and if he look not, probabilities will never excuse him. He that hath no such general principle, lives Irresolute, unsettled, indeterminate in

his judgement, and easily changeth his opinion. Upon every new reason he repents his former doings. He is vehement to will, and as violent to leave off. As long as he hath no stable maxim to govern himself by, he cannot be brought into the way when he is out, but is incapable of help or counsel. Least I should proceed too far in speculation, I explicate my self by familiar examples.

CHAP. XVIII.

Probabilities prevail not against established Maxims.

A Gentleman enters to serve in Court. If he have no general maxim, by which to guide his actions, you shall see him live at random, not unlike unto a Vessel, that wanting a Stern, Oar, or Sail, is carried hither and thither, forward and backward, as mens wits do ebb and flow; and he is tossed up and down with the wind of every Courtiers mouth. But if he oblige himself to get honour and preferment, and take for a principle, *that nothing is to be done that may hinder preferment, but all is to be done that may further it*; you shall see him presently square his

his

his actions by this Rule, and become another man. He learns how to distinguish between persons and persons; how to observe time and place; when to advance, and when to retreat. He is not lavish in word or gesture, but fearful at every the least appearance of impeding his preferment. A whole army of reasons will never make him yield to commit an undecency, if one single argument point out danger of hindring his promotion. Let us descend more to particulars.

The question is asked, Whether this Gentleman may without danger of putting stop to his preferment, appear in the Court not in the fashion. Take it in the terms proposed, and it is very probable he may. Because the legitimate cause of Honour and preferment depends not upon his going or not going in the fashion, but upon his virtue, his good talents, worth, and noble qualities. But as long as his secret intention of rising guides him, I dare answer for him, that the meet apprehension of the tongue of his Rivals, shall more prevail with him, even to make him spend above his ability, to be in the fashion, than a whole volley of probabilities to make him forsake it.

The same happens in spiritual affairs. He that hath no fixed maxim to steer his actions by, will find out hundreds of probabilities

to enlarge his conscience, to eschew hardship, to please sense, and to lull himself asleep with a probable persuasion, that the way, which Christ taught to be narrow, is now become very broad, and that the eye of a Needle is now grown as wide as a City Gate: So that not only Camels, but Camels with their Loads also may easily enter into Heaven without stooping. Whereas this case, by the testimony of Christ was reserved to Gods Omnipotency. He that keeps before his eye some solid maxim of eternal verity, is so freightened with divine fear, that contrary probabilities cannot dilate him.

Hence you may gather the reason why learned conscientious men are large in their opinions to others, and straight to themselves. Their own motions are made by Needle and Compass, and therefore in all variation they are timorous. But when they give counsel to others, they answer to the plain case, without having regard to the private axiom, which every one keeps secret to himself. Or if the axiom be mentioned, they look upon it not as a Rule, but as a meer circumstance, and so it hinders not the ease making of the case probable. But if they be told in confidence that it is an axiom, and the aim of their private drift; then you shall see them scrupulously wave the difficulty,

ry, and scarce ever be positive against it; because they feel their own conscience screwed into the answer. In this point is discovered a true mastery of spirit: In this consists the art of directing and securing the Conscience.

CHAP. XIX.

Examples out of holy Scripture of probable opinions against Maxims.

1 Example.

The Maxim. The Lord commanding by himself ought to be obeyed.

IF it might have been lawful to set aside this principle, *The Lords Command is absolutely to be obeyed*; See with what probability *Adam* and *Eve* might have discoursed in this manner. To eat an Apple is not intrinsically ill, because that which enters in doth not defile. And perhaps it is not matter sufficient to found so heavy a precept, that the breach thereof should deserve death. But grant it be, yet the good that comes from

eating will prevent the ill, and recompence the harm : For to know good and evil is a divine perfection , and will raise us to the similitude of the Deity. And if we be like to God, we shall be immortal; if immortal, then the *Serpent* sayes true, that we shall not dye. Without doubt it is a good spirit that speaks, because the Lord, who created all things very good, would never have permitted an evil one to enter into Paradise. Besides an evil spirit would never wish us so well, as to inform us with so much civility of the high dignity we may be raised unto. In truth there is no reason why he should forge a lye, seeing he can gain nothing by deluding us. The probability for *Adam* was much greater : For on the one side he could not forsake his Wife, whom the Lord had given him to love, and live with : On the other side if he did not eat, his life would be intolerable, because she would alwaies be contristated, and there would follow a perpetual disunion of mind and wills between them. Again the Lord, who had conjoyned them in body, could not rationally disapprove, that they should be united in mind, for the avoiding of innumerable disorders. Behold what they might have said for themselves. But their shrinking from this principle, *The Lords Command is inviolably to be obeyed,* perhaps

haps made such like probabilities suggested by the Devil to bluster and grow big: Whereas if they had stuck to it, they would have laughed at the silliness of the Serpents argument, who being an Angel, had such shallow invention.

2 Example.

Maxim. *The Lord commanding by his Substitute ought to be obeyed.*

THe Lord put a period to the Kingdom of *Saul* for a fact that might seem warrantable by strong probabilities. *Saul* was commanded by *Samuel* not to offer Sacrifice before his return. Let us see the reasons that moved *Saul* to transgress this precept. *Samuel* was scarce departed, but the Philistines swarming in number like the sands of the Sea, encamped themselves close by *Saul*. The Souldiers of *Saul* being very few, were struck with such terror at the sight of them, that they began to run away by whole troops; The Philistines taking the advantage both of time and place, drew out into the field, and were upon the point of giving battel. *Saul*, who had hitherto been quiet out of respect

to the precept, began now to rouse himself, but withal stood perplexed and dubious what to resolve on. At length he cast the matter into the scales of probability, and discoursed thus. To decline the fight is not possible : to fight, without first having appeased the face of the Lord by sacrifice, is temerarious, and perhaps impious : To expect *Samuel* is imprudence, seeing no man knows where he is, nor when he will come. All delays are dangerous, because the present state requires action not deliberation, for the enemy stands in battel array ready to force me. Besides, some of my Souldiers are fled, others look the same way, and all the rest refuse to draw sword, unless they may be sure of the Lords protection. Because being few in number, it is madness to oppose a vast multitude, unless they have the Lords favour to shelter them, which is onely to be got by sacrifice. So that all things considered it is necessary to offer Sacrifice. Necessity turned the balance, and made it very probable that the precept did not urge in this pressing case of necessity. *Saul* therefore offered Sacrifice, protesting that he did it with pure intention to appease the face of the Lord, and that he retained still a desire to observe the Command, but could not resist necessity. One would think, that in these circumstances *Saul* might

might have been held blameless. But because no circumstance could sufficiently authorize him to desert this principle: *The Lord is to be obeyed when he commands by his Substitute.* Samuel gave him a sharp check, and told him: *Thou hast done foolishly*, 1 Kin. 13. 13. that is, without sense, wit or brains, Because *obedience being better than sacrifice*, ch. 15. 22. all reasons that oppose the obligation of obeying a command given by a lawful Superior, are so far from carrying with them a sufficient probability to ground a prudent action, that they are all vain, foolish, and none at all. And they may cost a Subject the loss of Heaven, as it cost Saul the loss of his Crown and Kingdom.

3 Example.

Maxim. *The Lords invitation ought to be accepted.*

THe same obligation there is of having and maintaining a correspondent principle, when the Lord intreats only, without giving any express command. For as when the Lord knocks, no reason can make it good

good, why you should not open; or when he calls, why he should not come; so nothing ought to persuade you, not to accept, when he invites. This is evident by the parable of those that were invited to a costly Supper, and excused themselves, *Luk. 14.* The Parable is known: Let us ponder their excuses. One was already engaged by promise to go see a Farm: And no man ought to break his word. Another had necessity of staying to try certain yoke of Oxen, which he had lately bought: And necessity hath no law. A third had impossibility of going, because being but newly Married, it was not possible to get his Wives consent: And impossibility makes all pardonable. Besides, all excused themselves, and therefore it had been singularity for any one in particular to have accepted the invitation. For singularity, even amongst vertuous men is held a vice; because you make your self more wise, or more zealous than the rest. These probabilities of excuse were the ground of their punishment; which was, to be eternally banished from the table, which their probable opinions made them refuse to sit at, and were the cause why others were invited to take their room. Let a soul that feels her self inferiorly invited by the Omnipotent to a banquet of prayer, to perfection and contemplation

temptation, take heed of excuses, though never so probable, lest not she any more, but others be called.

4 Example.

Maxim. A strong presumption of the Lord's Will, ought to be held for his will.

IT is sufficient to see, that the will of the Lord be made manifest by a prudent conjecture, or at least by a strong presumption, that it may stand for a directing principle. *Esther* was raised from a low state to wed a Diadem: She had scarce possession of it, but *Mardocheus* pressed her to acquaint the King, how that the people of the Lord was in danger to be destroyed. She being now become a Courtier, and a principiant in policy, found difficulty to do it. Her case may be proposed thus. Whether or no a man is obliged in conscience to thrust himself upon the furthering of an uncertain good, with the certain danger of blasting his own budding fortune, of incurring the displeasure of his Sovereign, and of being lyable to death, by doing openly against the known approved laws. *Esther* judged it by the rule of

of nature, and by the maxim of the world, and therefore made sure that the sentence would have passed in her favour. But as soon as *Mardocheus* instilled into her a principle, which he gathered only out of the vehement presumption of the circumstances, to wit: *The Lord required of her, that she should put her self forward*: She immediately let go her probable hold, as being too weak to oppose the Lords will. If she had replied unto the maxim: *And perhaps the Lord requires it not*. She might well have followed a probable opinion, but her Conscience would alwaies have upbraided her for not following the Lord.

I fear I have insisted upon this point a little longer then will agree with your approval. Indeed said I, it seems to me, that you have been a little too severe against probable opinions, which notwithstanding by the judgement of very learned men may be followed with a secure Conscience. Pardon me (said he) in this: For if I had known how to be clear in my expressions, I intended not so much as to touch that question. Take therefore in few words what I have said in many.

*The sum of what hath been said concerning
probable opinions.*

IN my former discourse I affirmed four things. First, that any case considered meerly in it self, may easily be made probable on either side. Secondly that men who work for an end, ought to have some particular private principle, by which to direct their actions and that many times they are obliged to have such a principle. Thirdly, that in the presence of that maxim or principle, it is very hard to make the contrary sufficiently probable. Fourthly, and chiefly (it being the end and cause why I entred upon this matter) that certain axioms or principles, which men are obliged to have, and shall not be excused if they have them not, are of such a nature, that it is impossible to have a true, real, practical probability against them. Of this kind are the four Maxims, which among hundred others, I have chosen out of the Bible to shew you the verity of my assertion. This maxim is of the same stamp with them: *Out of the true Religion is no salvation: Or, no other Religion can be true but that which Christ founded.* For I maintain it, that it is not possible

possible to make the contrary practically probable. In all which, I determine nothing what may be done in case that you make a thing truly and really probable: and I think you will scarce allow, that a prudent man should follow an opinion in practise that is onely seemingly and falsely probable. Let us proceed.

CHAP. XX.

Why out of the true Religion there can be no salvation.

I Have said, as I told you, long upon this matter, to the end that you might learn, how that the Lords will cannot be countermanded by any probable or possible reasons. So that if the Lord give a command, and threaten to punish the disobedient, it is not secure to make many discourses upon the precept, but it is necessary to obey. For the Lord will not be jeasted with, nor laughed at. He is severe and rigorous in exacting an account of his precept, and chastiseth very shrewdly the neglect of it. The Lord commanded *Adam* not to eat of the Apple. You see what an austere punishment was laid

laid upon him, and all us his posterity for disobedience. All hopes of recovering the divine favour were quite cut off, and made impossible, till God himself was pleased to descend to the baseness of humane flesh, and be made man in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He being the second Person of the most Blessed Trinity was called Jesus Christ, and by the precious merits of his bitter death and passion, made a perfect attonement between us, and his eternal Father. In recompence of which, all power was given to him, and he by vertue of the same power framed a Religion, clean unspotted, Jam. 1.27. He made by it perpetual Priests unto himself, Exod. 29. 2. And if you demand, *What is this Religion?* Your Fore-fathers shall answer you, *that it is the victim of the Lords passage: It is the Religion of the Phase, Exod. 12. v. 17. and 43.* That is, it is a Religion of the real and true victim offered once upon the Cross, of which, the Sacrifices of the old Law were only types and figures. This is the Religion which Christ made, prescribing unto us the manner of walking in it. This is the Religion, which he promiserh to conserue, to be present with it till the end of the world, and that it shall be taught all truth, without possibility of erring. He doth not leave this Religion to the liberty of every subtile malicious

rious wit, to cut and mince it, to chop and change it at his pleasure. This Religion is his Dear and his Spouse; and therefore one alone, and the onely help to Salvation, of which the Ark of *Noah* was a type, as being one, and the onely means to escape the Deluge. Christ protesteth that in this his Religion he himself is the way, and the only way, and that there is no other way to heaven but by him. Wherefore whatsoever you may hear of probable opinions, that teach you another way, and make you believe that Christ is here, and Christ is there, and Christ is with them, or Christ is within them: Beware of false Prophets who say, *The Lord did speak, when the Lord spoke not*, Jer. 14. 13. and lay for a Maxim, that it is not possible for any other Religion to be true, than what Christ founded. and therefore he that walks not in Christs Religion, walks not in the way to heaven, and he that walks not in the way to it, shall never arrive at it.

As soon as he had ended, I told him, that I desired nothing more then to be assured of Christs Religion. And I had hitherto used much labour in seeking it, but could not find it. To which he answered,

CHAP. XXI.

Why the Seeker cannot find the true Religion.

IF you seek Christ's Religion, as you have done hitherto, you may seek all the dayes of your life, and be never the nearer. Because you are like to a man, that benighted in a wood, and being entred into by-paths, seeks his way by groping, or having day-light, is wholly sollicitous to follow the track made by Beasts and their Keepers. Imagine you whether by going forward he is likely to recover the high way. So you have left the beaten road of Religion, which was troden by Christ and his followers, and are entred into many By-religions, which thwart and cross one the other. They lead into a wilderness of confusion, where the end of one Religion begets another; and at length you will find no Religion at all, unlesse you make it.

Be attent now, and I will give you such a ray of knowledge, that as it is easie to distinguish a Man from any Ape, so shall you be able to discern the true Religion of

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Christ

Christ from all those which the Devil hath dressed up with mymical probabilities to mock you. And I will put you in such a way, that unless you wilfully shut your eyes, you shall as clearly see the credibility of assenting to the true faith, as you behold the Sun to shine. But first give me leave to ask you a question.

CHAP. XXII.

A digression concerning Papists.

I Pray tell me, what harm would it have done you, to have had a Papist present at your Conference? How! said I, Papists there? Would you have me turn Idolater in mine old dayes? I do not say so neither (said he.) Only I would not have you condemn them before you hear them. No discreet Judge will send men to the Gallows, though never so many hainous crimes be laid to their charge, till he have heard them speak for themselves. Perhaps Papists are farther off from Idolatry, then you from true knowledge, or he that taught you from sincere dealing. If you know any of them, that live according to the faith, which they profess:

less : reflect, I pray, if they have not the repute of honest men. If you have ever treated with them, reflect again, whether they carry themselves otherwise then civilly and decently, or whether you have heard any word from their mouths, that may favour of not believing in, or adoring one God alone, or of not hoping to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ. Can you think it credible that prudent men should be so dull and doltish, as in the midst of a people that cries out against Idolatry, they should deny the Lord of all, and make Gods of stocks and stones ? Open the eyes of your understanding, and suspect rather that some untruths may be forged against them. Howsoever, I think the presence of a Papist would not have infected you, nor his speech have bewitched you. Upon my word, he is a man, as you are, although you may happily have heard him been described for a monster. And I hope that you have discretion enough to lend him an ear, and keep your heart for the Lord and your self. But let a Papist be whatsoever he will, you that are a Seeker, ought to try the Religion, and search into the depth of it, and not to take upon trust what the enemies of Papist Religion teach you, I admire (quoth I) to hear this out of your mouth, who at other times have been so bit-

rer against them. I would not (said he) for all this, have you take me for a Papist. But I will tell you in secret, that Court policy is one thing, when we look upon the times; and Conscience is another, when we are asked counsel: and that it is one thing to choose a Religion to live in; and another to reserve one to die in. Is it possible then (said I) can there be any good in Popery? I answer you (said he) as *Philip* did *Nathaniel*. *Philip* told *Nathaniel* that he had found the *Messias* *Iesus* of *Nazareth*. *Nathaniel* replied, *Can any good come out of Nazareth?* *Joh. i. 46.* *Philip* answered him, as I do you: *Come and see, ver. 46.* When you are invited to buy any thing; you may enter the shop, you may see, handle, turn and consider the ware, and if you like it not, you are free to leave it. But if you find it better there, and better cheap then elsewhere, to forbear buying merely because you had before an ill opinion of the shop, hath somewhat of the malignity, which I hope is not in you, whom in this case I look upon as a true *Israelite* void of deceit. My meaning is that if you meet with the true Religion where you least expected to find it, you ought cheerfully to embrace it, and not obstinately reject it, merely upon this score, because you had been long erroneously informed, that it was not there.

I pray tell me (said I) whether the Gentleman you recommend me to be a Papist or no. Care not what he is (said he) because it may prejudice the liberty of your discourse. I assure you that he is an honest man, and a Learned one. Rely upon his honesty that he will not dilude you and upon his learning that he is able to instruct you. Take heed of those Masters in knowledge whose lives gain them small credit, least interest make them malicious to blind you: And commit not your soul to ignorant guides, because it is dangerous to chop Logick with the Devil.

I will now point at some general heads, which shall infallibly bring you to find out the true Religion.

CHAP. XXIII.

Points to be observed by the Seeker in choosing a Religion.

ALL Religions now a daies preach Christ, but all have him nor. Apply the touchstone, and you shall discover which is true gold, which counterfeir. Observe by the Rules following three things. First, What

Religion ought to spring from Christ. Secondly, What Religion hath received greatest favour from him. Thirdly, What Religion it is that honours and loves him most. This is done by comparing Christ to the Religions, the Religions among themselves, and the Religions to Christ. Out of which you shall clearly see what Religion Christ founded. Then your natural discourse will tell you which is the onely true one.

CHAP. XXIV.

Christ is compared to the Religions.

1. **C***hrist is Author of the true Religion.* He delivered it to his Apottles, they to others, till it was handed to us. Seek therefore the Religion, of whose beginning from our dayes upwards, no Annals, History or Chronicle maketh mention, till you come to Christ. And do not hold Christ to be founder of that Religion, of which any mean Historographer can name you the first Author, and shew you the precise time, place, manner, and other circumstances, in which it first began,

2. *Christ*

2. *Christ is obliged to conserve his own Religion till the the end of the world.* Seek what Religion flourished in all Ages, and what in some of them was not so much as known or named. For Christ to conserve his Religion, was not to conserve *Peter* or the Apostles, who are all dead, but he was to conserve the same essential seat and form, the same Authority, Power, Jurisdiction, and the like, which he communicated to *Peter* and the Apostles at his first founding it. Therefore whatsoever was conferred upon *Peter* as chief head and ruler of his Religion, ought to pass invariably to every one of *Peter's* Successors as long as the world shall endure, in the same manner as all Royal Prerogatives descend with the Crown upon all those that lawfully succeed to kingly dignity. Otherwise Christ doth not conserve his Religion, but lets it decay. Seek who were *Peters* Successors, and what Religion hath them. For that Religion comes in by intrusion, not by succession, which in stead of having them, derides them.

3. *Christ stirs up his own Religion to virtue and perfection.* It would be against the prudence of Christ, to exact from weak men high and sublime actions, unless he did communicate unto them proportionable abilities to perform what he requires. Seek what Reli-

gion hath received plenty of Supernatural helps and graces; and what Religion it is, that by the good use of them, hath produced in all ages an abundance of men famous for holiness of life and sanctity. And do not hold that Religion to be legitimate, which cannot shew, or name, or find upon Record any one man, whose irreprehensible life made him known to the world as a worthy of-spring of the grace of Jesus Christ.

4. *Christ is an enemy to the world, the flesh and the devil.* Every man is obliged in baptism to renounce the pomps of them. Seek the Religion, that proposeth to you greater and more efficacious helps to perform it. Seek, I say, what Religion walks to heaven by the streight way of penance, and enters in by the narrow gate of mortification. And shun that Religion as most pleasing to the Devil, which opens a broad way to vice and sensuality.

5. *Christ commands that his Religion be Preaching through the whole world.* First then, Christ must send Preachers. Secondly, He must send them to all parts of the whole Universe, and give them zeal to convert Souls. Thirdly, They must all preach his Religion, of which this shall be a mark, that they all preach one and the same, not divers Doctrines. Examine therefore diligently what Re-

Religion hath been continually taught in all ages to all Nations : and what Religion to some People or Countrey onely, and at certain times. Secondly, What Commission the Preachers have : whether lineally descending from Christ, for these onely ought to be heard, or vainly arising from themselves, or unadvisedly derived from others, to whom Christ gave no authority : For all these enter in by the window, not by the door, and are Wolves, not Pastors. Seek again what labour and pains the Preachers take in propagating the Gospel in instructing the ignorant, and in converting of others. Out of which you may gather, whether love of souls, or private interest move them. Search further what Religion it is, that preacheth in all places one sole Faith without discord of opinions ; and you shall find that the unity of truth can spring from no other head than Christ Jesus.

CHAP. XXV.

The Religions are compared one to the other.

1. **I***N Security.* Whether that Religion be more secure, which promiseth infallibility, and impossibility to erre, or that Religion, which professeth it self to be fallible, and cannot assure you but that it doth erre. Cease not to seek, as long as you find only weak props for your belief, and be not afraid to adhere firmly. when you may build upon the rock of infallible Authority: For the Religion which is adorned with this, is an honour to Christ, and a worthy support of Faith.

2. *In confirming doctrine.* Whether that Religion doth convince more potently whose articles and points are all confirmed by supernatural testimonies; or that Religion, which neither hath, nor careth to have any other proof in it, than humane, and meerly natural. Ponder well the Religion, whose reports have been ratified from heaven by a celestial tongue, that is, by Miracles. And let any man judge whether it be credible that
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Christ would work so many wonders to confirm any other Religion than his own.

3. *In facilitating faith and works.* Whether that Religion doth more facilitate faith which prescribes you an easie infallible Rule, by which you may certainly know what to believe, and what not ; or that Religion which leaves you to your self, to find it out if you can. Whosoever works without rule, square, line, or compass, shall be liable to error, not be directed by Art : So he that extends to frame his actions according to the life of Christ the Prototypon, must not live in a Religion at random, but must apply himself to the Religion that hath received such like spiritual instruments by the merits of Christ, and teacheth the right use of them.

4. *In quieting the mind.* Whether, that Religion best quiet the mind, which clear-eth all doubts, resolveth all questions, gives a positive answer to all controversies, wipes away all scruples, and in all cases secures the conscience ; or that Religion, which never frees you from a tacite fear of being in the wrong, but alwayes stings you with an anxious desire to search further. No Religion can perfectly appease the mind, unless there be an Oracle in it that is divine, to wit, a spirit of infallible truth, that is to move onely according to Christs will and Doctrine.

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5. *In curing the Soul.* Whether that Religion can best cure all mental maladies, which hath in it certain odoriferous elixir's and balsams distilled from the precious wounds of Jesus Christ; which can distinguish spirits; which hath power over Devils, which hath soverain antidotes against all sorts of temptations, and hath the use and experience of giving ease to all afflicted minds: Or that Religion, which is yet to learn what it is to manage the interior man.

CHAP. XXVI.

The Religions are compared to Christ.

I. **T***OWARDS the Person of Christ.* That Religion hath a true kindness for the person of Christ, which adoring him as perfect God and Man, looks upon his merits as the spring of all her good, and making daily commemoration of his death and Passion, humbly acknowledgeth that what she hath or can have, what she doth or can do, flows from the source of his mercy. And therefore moved with a vehement desire that he may be known, and loved by the whole world,

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is continually begging, that the torrent of his infinite satisfactory goodness may be derived to the souls of all that are capable of it, both living and dead. And not content with bare desire, sends to all parts of the Universe men sufficiently instructed with abilities to reduce the erring or straying sheep into Christs fold. That Religion esteems Christ in words only, which besides words useth little or no industry to promote his service.

2. *Towards the honour of Christ.* That Religion seeks really to honour Christ, which sticking close to his commands, sets so high a price upon them, that rather than transgress them, or forgo his service, or lose faith in him, or fall into his disgrace, is prepared to lay down her life, to sacrifice her fortunes, and be dispoiled of whatsoever is dear unto her. That Religion seeks not Christs honour, but her own interest, which cleaves no longer to any principle of Christ, then whilst it doth agree with her commodity, which will not understand the principles of Christs power and love, when they make not for her ends, but is so addicted to sense, that she will sooner forsake them all than abandon her own ease.

3. *Towards the Word of God.* That Religion carrieth it self with due respect to Gods Word, which hath the Bible in high veneration

ration, holding it to be full of sublime and profound mysteries, as having been penned by the Holy Ghost, and as being shut up with such divine and mystical seals, *as no man can be found either in heaven or earth, or under the earth, worthy to open the same, except the Lamb that was slain.* Revel. 5. 3. 6. And therefore not presuming upon her own understanding, or relying upon any humane interpretation, though the man that interprets be never so learned, is alwayes begging with submissive and humble prayer, that she may receive the right sense and hidden meaning of it from the same divine Spirit that wrote it. That Religion holds the Bible in mean esteem, which thinks that any Woman or Child, that any rude or ignorant person is worthy to interpret and gloss it, if he be able to read it. Now because such unlearned wits can penetrate no further than the bark or out-side, this Religion can never hope to eat of the kernel, or taste of the marrow, but must be content to feed upon what dull and gross understandings can deliver.

4. *Towards the will of Christ.* That Religion is wholly attent to do Christs sacred will, which fears to distast, and labours to her uttermost to please him. Which knowing that Christ hates sin, doth fly it; that
Christ

Christ loves vertue, doth practise it, that Christ gives precepts and counsels, doth chearfully obey, and follow them, seeking in all things to conform her self to the best will and pleasure of Jesus Christ. That Religion cares little to do Christs will, which saith that his Commandements are impossible, which fears not his judgements, but presumes upon his mercies; or so exaggerates his rigour, as she despairs of his goodnesse; which works like a slave, who will do no more then what he is commanded, and therefore she refuseth to do any act of supererogation. She knows well enough that amongst men, it is laudable for a man in things not commanded to please his Master, to pleasure his Friend, to content his Father, to exhilarate his Spouse, or to endear his Sovereign. And the true Religion knows also that Christ by his death and passion is become to every Soul a Master, Friend, Father, Spouse and Sovereign, and therefore with a free heart does things grateful to him, without being expressly commanded to do them.

5. *Towards all that belongs to Christ.* That Religion imitates a loving Spouse, which for the love she bears to Christ, honours and loves whatsoever appertains to Christ her Spouse. He cannot love you really, who before your face kicks your dog, or your servant,

vant, or any thing that is yours. And much less can his love be sincere and cordial, if in your presence he affronts your best friends, your nearest relations, and in contemptible wise laughs at your Mother. He that loves you must manifest his love by respecting all that is yours, and by holding it in the same degree of veneration, as he knows it is in your esteem. That Religion gives evident signs of respect, honour and love to Christ, which doth reverence the Saints, because they are Christs friends; honours the Virgin *Mary*, because she is Christs Mother; and doth highly esteem many other things; meerly because they are consecrated to the service of Christ, or do relate to his person.

That Religion plays the part of a step-dame, which saith to Christ in his face: Christ I love thee, but I neither care for thy Mother, nor for any childe or friend thou hast in Paradise, no, although he were mine own Father, Mother, Brother or Sister, or any of the dearest acquaintance that ever I had. Gentle Reader, didst thou once love these, and canst thou now like the Religion that forbids thee to care any more for them? that commands thee to forget, slight and contemn them, for no other reason, but meerly because Jesus Christ, out of the abundance of his mercy hath been pleased to take them

them up to himself, and honour them with the happy beatifical vision of God. What could Satan do more, then teach thee to hate whom Christ loves ?

CHAP. XXVII.

A Conclusion drawn out of the Premisses.

OUc of what hath been said, I conclude, that the Religion which Christ himself founded, and still conserves in being, adorning it with sanctity, aiming it against iniquity, and sending it to teach in all ages and places one and same universal doctrine; that the Religion, which hath an impossibility of erring, a security of knowing, a facility of working, a miraculous subsisting, and a comfortable guide of living; which hath in it an oracle of truth to quiet the conscience, an absolute power to quell the Devil, and a most assured art to cure all spiritual maladies : I say, that the Religion, which looks upon the merits of Jesus Christ, with hope; upon his honour, with zeal; upon his Word, with reverence; upon his will, with fidelity; upon his Mother, with duty;

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upon his friends with respect; and upon whatsoever belongs to him, with esteem and love; I conclude, and say, that the Religion, which hath, and doth all these things, shewing evidently that she hath, and doth them all and every one of them, is comfortable in it self, honourable to Christ, and may be securely embraced by any prudent man.

On the other side, he is very imprudent, who ventures his soul in a Religion, which at most doth onely pretend to have or do some of them, not all: And he is much more to be blamed, if his Religion have none of them, or makes profession to destroy the best part of them. If thou art serious in seeking a Religion, do not hold thy self safe, as long as thou mayest be safer. And where-soever thou meetest with a Religion, that is deficient in any one of these, take it for a sure token, that she is none of Christs.

I have now put a clew of thread into your hand, which if you follow, you shall easily and sweetly come out of the labyrinth, into which your importune thoughts have brought you. But because I would not have you depart with the opinion, that I am a Papist, I will tell you the motives I have against them.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Motives against Popery.

P Apists have many observances, which I cannot away with. They will have you go to confession, and you must tell all your sins, and then you must do penance, and fast and discipline; and be bound to God knows how many rigorous practises. I wonder what pleasure they can take in such like ceremonies. I that love certain pretty things, and have done in my dayes, what I would be loth the air should know, if I could help it; in what a case should I be, if I were such a fool, as to tell them of it? They would so hamper me, before they had done with me, that I fear they would make me do things which nature abhors to think of. I must confess, that I feel sometimes regrets and gripings of Conscience, that trouble my mirth, and press upon me, to hearken to Religion; but a full table, good liquour, and certain delightful sports and dalliances joyned with a fat soil, convince me, that a fasting Religion is not for my purpose.

It may be (said I) that misunderstanding begets difficulties, and that they appear greater in the fancy, than they prove afterwards in reality. I assure you that Hell and Eternity are so fixed in my mind, that I would rather *chastise my body* in this world with *Paul* 2 *Cor.* 9. 27. then burn eternally body and soul in the next with *Lucifer*. Wheresoever I find the infallible true Religion, I will embrace it because it is true, nor shun it, because it is hard; nay if it be to be won by toil and labour, I shall conceive rather a higher esteem of its worth; because sweat and labour accompany noble enterprises, and generous minds feed upon difficulties. Heaven is gained by force, and he that useth violence shall carry the palm. Let me find the true faith, and I will prefer the Lord, my soul, and heaven before whatsoever may stand between us.

I like your resolution well (said he) and you move so much, that I will make it my business to attend how to save my soul. In the meantime take these two documents. By the first you shall gather, who instructs you with truth; by the other, how to dispose your self to receive it.

CHAP. XXIX.

Two Documents for the Seeker.

They that sell ill ware, procure to have dark shēps, that so they may put it off with fine words. They that defend an ill cause, would never by their good wills be brought to the barr, and much less to the pleading of the chief point. So they that maintain false Religions, have many times smooth and silken language; but they cloud themselves in sophistry, and avoid to their power, the light of a learned adversary. They are obscure in their answers, and wrest your attention to some other matter than what was proposed, shifting off with subtilty, the closing in the true point of the controversie: Yet they are clear enough in their jests, free in their taunts, and more ready to give a scoff to your demand, than a solution, pretending by this, that because they have made it ridiculous, you may hold it erroneous. Their backwardness to answer, when you feelingly press them, declares that they have more mind to leave you in your error, than to

trouble themselves with the care of settling you in the way of salvation. The Doctors of truth seek after no windings or turnings, no shiftings or shufflings, but march up with open breast to meet the difficulty. The Gentleman, to whom I have recommended you, will be serious, because the matter of salvation is of main importance: He will be plain, clear, distinct, and positive in his speech, because intelligibility is required here, not subtilty. He will hear you with patience, and answer you with charity. I take these to be signs of a tongue that speaks verity. I desire you to collect all your difficulties together, to propose them thoroughly, and not be content with any answer whatsoever, but reply, and reply again, and do not submit your judgement, till you are fully convinced. But this being done, then let your will work with the prudence requisite in such a case, and shew by a cheerful determination to believe, the pious affection that she bears to the Lord of truth: For no wise man ought to be stubborn and obstinate against the known truth, because this doth highly offend the Divine Majesty.

The last Document, which I intend also (God willing) to practise my self, is this. Before you go to confer with any one, about this important affair of your eternall good,
 retire

retire your self into the secret closet of your heart, and there with bended knee and weeping eye beg light of the Father of lights, a light I say, that may shine upon your understanding, and give you a clear knowledge of the true Religion. Beg it by the Merits and Passion of Jesus Christ your Redeemer. Beg humbly also of the same Jesus Christ, that you may not be deceived by error, by imprudence, or by mistakes: But that you may propose your doubts with a submissive will to be instructed, and with a prepared heart to receive the purity of the Gospel. My wishes are, that sweet Jesus grant it both to you, and me, and that it may be unto us both a pledge of eternal comfort.

CHAP. XXX.

The Seeker finds what he sought.

I Followed this wholsom counsel, I spoke with the Gentleman, and I received from him entire satisfaction of all my doubts. The clouds of trouble are now vanished, my mind

is become serene, and my faith so firm, that it is not possible, that I can have any more prudent doubt in it. The comfort I received was unspeakable, when I heard him interpret the Bible. It represented to my thoughts a well tuned Lute, which being touched by an ignorant hand offends the ear with harsh sounds, but being handled by a skilful artist, makes sweet and pleasant melody. So the Word of God, in the mouth of the unlearned, makes jarring in sense, and contradiction in opinions, but being expounded by him that hath the spirit of understanding, it makes most admirable harmony and divine concord. It would not be displeasing unto thee, Dear Reader, to hear how all the places quoted in the above mentioned conference, which seems to impugn and destroy one the other, do notwithstanding, being rightly understood, concur to make up one unparalleled fabrick of a divine spiritual Edifice, as do timber, iron, stone and mortar, compose one stately building, when each one of them is laid in its proper place, but being disordered breeds confusion. I may be encouraged to perform it, if I shall come to know that this small labour is any way accepted. But not to defraud thee of thy whole expectation, I will briefly set down the discourse which the Gentleman held with me concerning

ning the first point of the sixth opinion about Idolatry, and honour due to the Lord, related in the eleventh Chapter. The sum of it was thus.

CHAP. XXXI.

What is requisite to understand the Bible well.

MAny things are required to understand the Bible well, which I will not touch at present. Among the rest, one is to believe firmly, that it is wholly mysterious, that it contains no superfluity, or error, and that no one place of it can contradict another. He that reads, and understands not, may judge at first sight that he meets with many apparent repugnancies. But this comes not from the defect of the sentence, which is written, but from the want of supernatural light in him that readeth. Diversity of light works diversity in judgement. If you have only the light of sense, you will affirm that the Sun stands still. And although you discover by the effect, that it is moved from East to West, yet the eye will never grant the motion;

tion; and if the eye be called to counsel, it will pervert the judgement. As sense is to reason, so is reason to the Word of God. You must deny sense to understand Philosophy, and you must captivate reason to penetrate the verities of faith. If you bring onely a natural and humane spirit to understand the Bible with, you shall see, and not understand, you shall read and read, and read, and be never the wiser. This shall appear in the passage I will touch in the ensuing Chapter: Where I will leave thee, my Reader, to try whether thy natural wit can teach thee to understand thy commandments.

CHAP. XXXII.

What the Spirit of the Lord teacheth concerning Images.

HE must needs read the Bible with a very dim light, that cannot discover a palpable difference between *making of graven Images* and *making of graven Images to ones self*: Or between drinking of Wine, and drinking of Wine till one be drunk. The Lord

Lord commanded the making of Images, and taught the art of making them, having at the same time severely forbidden the making them *to ones self*: For the Lord in the Commandements that he delivered to *Moses*, and solemnly published upon Mount Sinai, wrote with his own finger, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image or likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above or that is in Earth beneath*, Exod. 20. 4. Yet the same Lord before he ended speaking with *Moses*, commanded that the likenets of things that are in heaven above, viz. of *Cherubins*, and of things that are in the earth beneath, viz. of *Pomgranates, Nuts, and Lillies* should be made. Moreover he infused into *Besaleel* and *Aholiah*, a godly wise spirit to make them, and then expressly reiterated the prohibition of making to ones self. *See I have called by name Besaleel: and I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge of all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold in Silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I have given with him Aholiah, and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted, I have put wisdom that they may make all that I have commanded thee*, Ex. 13. 4. By vertue of this godly spirit they made

made Pomgranats, Nuts and Lillies, they wove Cherubins into the Veil, and Curtains, they made two golden Statues, or Images of Cherubins, and placed them upon the Mercy Seat. Which the Lord was so far from disapproving, that he did alwayes afterwards commune and speak with *Moses* from *between the two Cherubins*, *Exod. 25. 22.* At the same time the Lord commanded a *perfume* to be made, forbidding the making it to themselves, or the making the like of it to smell thereto, *Exod. 30. 37.* You see that the Lord makes a difference between *making* and *making to ones self*. He likes and commands the making, and yet forbids the making to ones self. So that the making, and consequently the having of images, pictures, statues, or the likenesses and similitude of things in heaven or in earth is not displeasing to the Lord, but the making them to ones self is detestable and abominable in his sight. Perhaps you may say, that you perceive not yet the full meaning of making an Image to ones self. An example will give you light. The golden Calf, and the brazen Serpent were two Images, or likenesses of things in the earth beneath. *Aaron* and the people erected the Calf to themselves, *Exod. 30. 37.* and so made it an Idol. *Moses* by the commandement of the Lord, *made the Serpent and set it for a sign*

sign. Numb. 21. 8. to be a figure of the Messias, that was to be raised upon the Cross, Wisd. 16. and so made it a representation. *Moses* was moved with zeal to beat down the Calf, and punish the offenders with death; the Lord was moved with compassion to preserve the Serpent, and reward the lookers on it with life. The idolaters fell prostrate before the Calf, and their adoration rested there: the true believers did reverence the Serpent, but their faith passed to the future Messias. They fixed their eye upon the figure, but their heart upon the Redeemer figured, for not the Serpent, but the Saviour represented by it gave the cure. Wherefore if any one had been insolently bent to throw down the Serpent, *Moses* would doubtlesse have been as fiery against him for his impiety, as he was zealous against the adorers of the Calf for their Idolatry. Because, as to set up the Calf, was to dishonour the Lord, so to pull down the Serpent, was to renounce the Messias. If you are still to seek what is to make an Image to ones self, know that these three things are very divers; to make an Image of ones self, for ones self, and to ones self. The two former are lawful, the third is damnable. If as yet you perceive nothing, then acknowledge your ignorance in understanding the Bible, seeing you can-

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not without an Interpreter understand so much as your Commandements. Confess that there is a mystery locked up in these words, and that you have not the key to open it. Beg of the Lord a clearer light, demand a fuller information of some learned man, or expect a larger Treatise from me, and then you shall admire that you could not comprehend it sooner. In the mean time I entreat you not to condemn or censure, those, who being taught by the holy Ghost, discover a more palpable difference between making, and making to ones self, then there is between drinking and drunkenness. Therefore as moderate wine exhilarates the heart, and immoderately taken causeth the detestable sin of drunkenness; so the good use of pictures and images is a help to piety; though the abuse of them be a ground for Idolatry. And as he deserves to be hissed out of the company of sober men, who to abolish the vice of drunkenness, would inveigh against all such as keep wine for a frugal table; so they who laudably cry out against Idolatry, are worthy to be blamed, when with bitter language they reprehend that, which the Lord himself was pleased to prescribe, command and teach.

CHAP XXXIII.

*What the Spirit of the Lord teacheth concerning
honour due to Men, Angels, and Holy things.*

THe Spirit of the Lord teacheth us, to hate Idolatry, to honour God, and to walk in pure spirit. The same spirit that cannot contradict it self, commandeth us to honour our Father, our Mother, our King, and all those to whom honour is due, *Rom. 3. 7. viz.* lawful Prelates, Magistrates, Masters.

Now to the end that the spirit of error may not weave it self into the manner of giving this honour, I will shew the harmonical sense of the Bible in the subordinate concord of these two Commands. First then,

All honour is due, and ought to be given to the Lord alone. This I suppose is granted on all sides. Yet I take it in the greatest latitude of rigour that the word *All*, and the word *alone* can admit. Mark what I say. I will shew that *all honour* of what sort or kind

kind soever it be, ought in a most strict and proper sense be given to the Lord God, and to the *Lord God alone*, and to no body else.

Yet I further affirm, that the Lord gives not an order contrary to this, when he commands us to honour Men or Angels. So that I undertake to declare two things : The one, that it is lawful, and that we ought to honour Men and Angels, which I will prove in this Chapter, and by it I intend to shew the non-sense of that Religion; which in the Eleventh precedent Chapter refused to do it for fear of Idolatry. The other, that this honour is no wayes prejudicial, but subordinate to the giving all honour and glory to the *Lord God alone*, which I will shew in the fortieth Chapter. Now to the first point.

Many reasons might be alledged to prove this verity. It were enough to say unto a man that fears the Lord, that the Lord commands us to honour our Father, King, &c. to take from him all scruple of Idolatry. But let us have the Bible before our eyes, and argue thus. Whatsoever honour we find in the Bible, that Patriarks, Prophets, and other faithful servants of the Lord, (who above all things hated Idolatry, and were fearful to offend a jealous God) did give to Men, Angels, or holy things, without ever being reprehended by the Lord, may lawfully be

be given by us to Men, Angels, and holy things, without danger of Idolatry, or of displeasing the Lord. The reason is because the Word of God doth relate and approve things well done, that we may do them; it reprehends things ill done, that we may avoid them. And wheresoever there appears but the least shadow of Idolatry, it fails not to rebuke the offender, that we may fear to fall into the same sin. Now there are infinite examples in the Bible, of Patriarchs, Prophets, Kings, and other most faithful servants of the Lord, that hated Idolatry. who notwithstanding bowed, kneeled down, and cast themselves prostrate before Men, Angels, and holy things. Yet there is no mention made in the Bible, that the Lord did reprehend or dislike them for it; which infallibly he would have done, if their hearts had been tainted with Idolatry. No man that reads the Bible (and you know how many there are that read it) can have the face to deny this. *Abraham, Daniel, Toby, Balam, Manoah* and his wife, *Peter, John*, and many others both in the old and new Testament, moved by the spirit of the Lord, worshiped Angels and Men, and yet they would not for the world have done any thing to provoke the Lords anger,

The Spirit of the Lord taught *Iacob* to bow himself seven times to his Brother *Eſau*: it taught *Leah*, *Rachel*, their Children, and their Servants to do the like. *Gen.* 33. v. 3. 67. It taught all the ſons of *Iſrael* to do obeſſance to *Joſeph* their younger Brother, and to bow themſelves before him with their faces to the earth, *Gen.* 42. 6. The men of our new Religion would perhaps have laughed at them, becauſe they being ſervants to the Lord, bowed to an earthly power. But they worſhipped the Lord in his perſon. *Nebuchadnezzar*, although he were a potent King, yet he caſt himſelf proſtrate at the feet of *Daniel* his ſlave, beholding him not as his ſlave, nor yet as God, but as a faithful ſervant of the Omnipotent, *Dan.* 2. 46. They, who will not ſtoop to their Sovereign, would like this example well, if Princes would be moved by it to worſhip them, as if they were ſervants of the Lord. But where humility is wanting, there the name of *Servant of the Lord* is wholly deſtroyed.

Joſhua the great Captain of the Lord worſhipped an Angel, as ſoon as he knew him to be an Angel, *Joſh.* 5. 14. And the Angel not onely accepted of the worſhip, but moreover commanded *Joſhua* to put off his ſhoes, becauſe the earth, on which he ſtood, was holy. The earth, was the prophane earth of

of *Hiericho*, and was only made holy by the presence of the Angel. *Ioshuab*, who had the Spirit of the Lord, unshod himself, performing this religious honour to the earth, as relating to the Angel, and worshipped the Angel as relating to God the Lord of all.

It is very credible that the Angel would never have commanded *Ioshua* to do an act displeasing to the Lord : And it is not to be presumed that any one of this new Religion is filled with greater zeal of the Lords honour, than was *Ioshua* the Chief General of the Lord of Hosts. Therefore if *Ioshua* did unshoe himself, stoop, bow to, reverence and worship the Angel, we ought not much to regard whether or no some others, whose names are not registred in the Bible, would have stood bolt upright, without motion, and have kept their hats on.

Neither ought we to take much notice of those, who perhaps would have sided with *Michol*, when she laughed at *David* for dancing before the Ark. The holy Text assures us that *David* did it, moved by the interior Spirit of the Lord, and that holding the royal purple in meaner esteem then he did the sanctity that shined in the Ark, he judged it religiosity to declare by that humble act, that the Diadem was not due to him by any other title, than by his favour, whom he ho-

moured in doing that reverence to the Ark. If you ask of me, what sanctity the wood of the Ark could have? I answer, that it is sufficient for us to know, that the Bible calls it *holy*, and that the Lord would have it held so: that he slew 50000. *Bethsamites* for a meer curious lifting up of their eye to view it: that he would have it touched only by Priests and Levites, and therefore chastised the rashness of *Oza* with suddain death, because he stretched forth his profane arm to sustain it from falling, when the Oxen that drew it, humbled, kicked, and made it totter. Let Lay-people learn by this example not to be too bold to use their unhallowed hands about things consecrated to Gods immediate service: For the Lord will have religious honour given to religious things.

Let us step a little aside, though not quite out of the way, and demand of such as deny to give honour to Saints, what it is they give to senseless creatures, when they go to Church to receive Bread and Wine. They uncover their heads, they compose their bodies, and I suppose their minds to, they bow, they kneel down, and use many more ceremonies before this Table, then when they eat in their own Parlours. What is this? what honour is this, which they give to bread and wine? If the honour be divine,

vine, it is palpable Idolatry : because divine honour cannot be given to any creature. If it be civil, it is ridiculous; because civil honour cannot be given to any that wants understanding. If it be a middle honour between both, which some call religious, they practise what they condemn, and they fall in o that, which they exhort others to avoid. For they honour that which is not God, and they give to bread and wine, what they deny to Saints and Angels. They honour Bread and Wine, two dead creatures, but what honour it is they give, neither they nor their Teachers can tell you. Yet they retain and give the same cerimonious honour (though at other times they cry out against cerimonies) to these two dull, inanimate creatures, that was given by their forefathers for many ages together for the true and real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ their Redeemer. They worship and adore these two earthly creatures, under pretence of a bare and naked memory of Christs Passion. And the Saints who are a living memory of the self same Passion, who are the fruit of Christs Merits, the end of his sufferings, the glory of his Triumph, and the crown of his labours, are not thought worthy of so much as a civil respect. What the Saints (who being like to the Angels see

these things in the divine Essence) will think of such men, or what their pious Ancestors will say to them, when they meet them in the next world, I leave to the seeking Reader to consider.

Let us return to our first argument. Seeing the Lord, who searcheth the reins and heart, is a jealous God, and spareth not his best friends, when they commit any sin, but visiteth the idolatrous iniquity of the Father unto the third and fourth generation: seeing therefore that the Lord did like and approve of the worship that was given by his servants to Men, Angels, and holy things, and caused these their actions to be registred in the Bible for our example, it follows only, that we raise a question, whether it be better and safer for us to imitate the footsteps of those whose vertues are commended by the testimony of Gods Word, or give ear to those, whom no man knows who they are, from whence they come, whether they go, who sent them, or with what spirit they speak. And who, in fine, alledge no other testimony for the truth of the new doctrine they preach, but their own bare word. As though, because they have the impudency or boldness to affirm it, every body else, without any further search into the matter, ought to have the simplicity to believe it.

But

But as he is blame-worthy, who will afford no honour to Saints or Angels, so he deserves just reprehension, who gives them too much, as shall appear in the next Chapter. Because all extreams are vicious.

CHAP. XXXIV.

What the Spirit of the Lord teacheth concerning the superstitious adoring of Angels.

S*imon Magnus* broached many pestilent errors in his dayes, and amongst the rest, that the Old Testament was as punctually to be observed as the New: that God did not make all things but (as *Manichey* professed afterward more at large) that Spiders, Frogs, Serpents, and the like, were created by the Devil; because it was unfit that such noysom creatures should have their origen from an infinite Goodness. These absurdities wonne small credit with the primitive Christians, who were well instructed, that the light of the Gospel had dispersed the figures of the old law, as the Sun doth Clouds, and made them cease: that Goodnesse had created all things very good, and that for *Adams* sin, Justice had commanded the Elements to

produce scourges. *Simon* betook himself to another stratagem, and sought to wrest a pious practise to his perverse end. He saw that Angels were much esteemed and worshipped by all the Christians of those times. Therefore to cover his impiety, he professed that he taught nothing, but what had been communicated unto him by the revelation of Angels. Then to the end that the Christians might be touched with greater religion, he highly extolled the dignity of the Angelical nature; and not content with mean exaggerations, he proceed at length so far as to term them Demy-Gods, and that consequently humble men ought to adore them with sacrifice, the good ones for their excellency, the bad ones for their power in creating.

The Spirit of the Lord moved *Paul* to beat down this sacrilegious error, *Let no man seduce you under shew of Humility, or in the Religion and worshipping of Angels* Coloss. 2.18. Which is to say, Humility is lovely, but beware of its name, when it is used for a cloke to beguile and seduce you. To honour Angels is very laudable: but to adore them as Demi-gods, and to offer to them the Religious worship of sacrifice, is to fall into the abominable superstition of Idolaters and Pagans, who having multiplicity of Gods, must of necessity

celity have some greater some lesser. But the first Commandment of the Lord, is, that thou shalt have, love, adore, and serve one God alone; and not have so much as the similitude or likeness of any thing, that may seem to stand in any inferior competency of a God-head. All Creatures are pure Servants, God alone is the Lord; wherefore although you have Revelations of Angels, you ought not presently to give credit to them, but you must examine and discuss the Revelation, that you may know whether it be a good or evil Spirit that speaks. *Believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they are of God, 1 John 4. 1. Because Satan is oftentimes transfigured into an Angel of Light, 2 Cor. 11. 14.* And whilst he seemingly persuades good things, he draws the Soul insensibly into foul and gross errors. But although he should say, that *he is an Angel from Heaven, yet if he Preach unto you any other Gospel, then what you have received, let him be accursed, Gal. 1. 6.* Because it is impossible that an Angel should come from Heaven, unless he came head-long with *Lucifer*, and teach a Doctrine that varies from the Doctrine of Christ.

Good Angels are so far from abusing mans Humility, to require sacrifice of him, or any other Worship that may intrench upon the Honour due to the Lord, that they rather seem

seem to refuse to be honoured by Men, that are eminently humble and holy, as appeareth *Rev.* 19. 10. and 22. as you shall see in the next Chapter.

CHAP. XXXV.

Of whom the Angels refuse to be honoured.

IF the followers of the new Religion be as well grounded in Humility, as they pretend to be sublime in spirit, they will understand what I shall now say; Otherwise I shall lose time, as if I should speak of Painting, Limbing, or Carving, with those that have no insight in these things.

Sr. John Evangelist having learned Humility and Meekness of Jesus Christ his Master, beholding the Majesty of the Angel in the *Revelations*, of whom he had learned many divine secrets, fell down at his feet, worshipping him to give him what was due to a Peer of Heaven. The Angel looking upon *John* as one of the chief Pillars of Christs Church, as an Apostle, an Evangelist, a Doctor, a Virgin, a Prophet, and as *Hierom* witnesseth, a Martyr; but above all, as honoured with the title of the *Disciple whom Iesus loved*. And therefore foreseeing

ing how high and eminent a place *John* was to possess in Heaven, said to him : *Do not do it, I am thy fellow servant. Adore God*, vers. 10. As if he had said, Honour and Worship is due to those who are Superiors. Fellow servants are equal; therefore do not worship me, who according to the stile of Heaven, am at the most but thy equal. Adore God, who is our common Lord. If a servant, as fellow servant have no authority over his companion, because authority raises him above his fellow, it follows clearly, that the words *Do not do it*, were of counsel only, not of command. *John* who had an Eagle-eye to behold the Divinity, had never yet opened it to view his own present or future dignity, and therefore could not see how to approve of this counsel. He called to mind the words of his Saviour, that *the least in Heaven was greater then the greatest in Earth*, Mat. 11. 11. and chose rather to subsist solidly in the lowly Foot-steps of his Masters humility, then venture to admit a thought of what he might be hereafter, and therefore he fell down again at the feet of the Angel to worship him. The Angel continued to treat *John* with respect : *John* answered with signs of an humble mind.

The like contract was between Sr. *Peter* and the Centurion, Act. 10. 25. The Centurion received

received *Peter* as chief of the Apostles, as a Messenger, or rather as an Angel sent from Heaven, and giving him respect due to his calling, worshipped him. *Peter* looking upon himself as a poor Fisher-man, as a great sinner, and as one that came to teach Humility, and not to engross Honour to his Office, would have declined as a sinful man, what the *Centurion* gave to him as a man of God. He that understands the Language of Humility, needs no larger Comment. To those that are ignorant thereof, I declare my self by a familiar example.

A King being enamoured of the beauty of some Countrey Peasant, after many interchanges of love and affection, sends one of his bosom friends to treat with her. She receives the Embassador with the respect that a poor maid ought to give to a person of great Nobility. He looking upon her as the designed Spouse of his Sovereign, may well say, *Madam, I pray do not so much honour to me, who am but your servant.* No intelligent man can think, that he intends by this manner of speech to command her. But she, if prudence guide her actions, will not omit with a modest blush to continue still the Honour she gave him, reflecting that he is certainly the Kings Favourite, and that it is yet uncertain what may happen between her and the Crown. To
take

take too much upon her before the time, might degrade her from Royal favours; whereas her humble behaviour makes her more lovely and amiable. The matter needs no application among such as have been brought up in the School of Humility. Let us return back to the Angels and Saints, and examine by the Bible whether or no they see, hear, and know what men do.

Although Angels do commonly appear in the shape of Young Men with wings, yet no man instructed in the right Faith, can think that they have need of an aerial body, or of any corporal instruments to see, hear, move, or flie with.

CHAP. XXXVI.

What the Spirit of the Lord teacheth concerning the Angels and Saints seeing, hearing, and knowing what men do:

THe distance between Heaven and Earth is very great, yet a Spirit in the twinkling of an eye, before the Sun can dart its Rayes from East to West, may be here, there, and back again. And although the Angelical Citizens could not move from their heavenly abode,

abode, yet the happiness of their condition makes them able to see, and hear a far off, without being beholding to propinquity of place. For *Dives* being in Hell, saw *Abraham* and *Lazarus*, and knew which was *Abraham*, and which was *Lazarus*. He spoke to *Abraham* and *Abraham* to him, and they understood one the other, although by reason of the great Chaos that was fixed between them, they could not meet together, *Luke* 16. 26.

This seeing, hearing, and speaking, with what eye, ear, or tongue was it done? To men that traffick wholly in Spirit this question is needless: because if they have ever heard the Lord speak to the interior ear of their heart they have found that the Lords Voice came not to them by earthly conveyances. But if they are ignorant of this Language, I fear they may tell me, that the Lord himself being a pure Spirit, can neither see nor hear. But *David* will tell them, *that such people are foolish and brutish, who think the Lord, who planted the ear, doth not hear, and he that framed the eye, doth not see, 1 sal. 93. 3.*

He hath a dull conceit or a spiritual essence, who allows it no manner of working above terrene. A Spirit, though yet clogged with Flesh, may see things secret and distant, with an eye that is proper to their nature. Which know-

knowledge is much more clear, as soon as the dust of this body, which dimms the spiritual light is shaken off. *Elizeus* saw in spirit all that *Giezi* treated with *Naaman Syru*, 1 Sam. 9. 19. *Peter* saw the false heart of *Ananias* and *Saphyra*, Acts 5. 4. *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* saw, and foresaw wonderful things. *Elias* seven years after that he was translated from humane conversation, sent a Letter to King *Joram*, admonishing him distinctly of the hainous crimes he had committed in that interval. If he had not known them, how could he have writ them? Let us pass to the Angels and Saints.

The Angels could not possibly perform the several Offices committed by the Lord to their Charge, if they wanted day-light to see, or ears of flesh to hear, or successive motion to be present. They are Messengers, they are Guides, they are Protectors, they offer up our Prayers, and every where execute the Lords command. As Messengers, they must know to whom they are sent, and where they shall find them: they must speak to be understood, they must see how the Embassy is taken, and they must understand the answer that is returned. As Guides, they must know who follows, and who stands still, and who goes another way. As they offer up our Prayers, they must be present to receive them,

them, they must expect our leisure, and not absent themselves, they must take them in what time, place, or manner soever they are made, they must understand them in what language soever they are said, although it were in the secret whisper of the mind. As Protectors, they must be obeyed, and feared, for the Lord commands us to obey them, and bids us beware of provoking them. *Because they will not pardon our Transgressions*, Exod. 32. 21.

Not only Angels, which are thus employed by the Lord, but the rest also understand distinctly what men do in this life. This appears, for that *they are sorry and weep when men commit sin*, Isai. 33. 7. and *they rejoyce when they are converted or repenteth*, Luk. 15. 10. Which they could not do, unless they knew both the sin, and the repentance. Because weeping or rejoycing for a thing, supposeth a knowledge, it being impossible to rejoyce for that, of which one is ignorant. No man can rejoyce that he hath a treasure hidden in his Garden, or that he is made Heir to some great Fortune, unless he first know it. Neither doth any man weep for the death of his friend, till he have the certainty of it. So no Angel can be sorry or glad for the fall or conversion of a sinner, unless he first know the interior motion of his faint or contrite Soul. Now seeing
that

that this joy is in Heaven before the Angels of God, in the same moment that the sinner repents; it follows that immediately in the same instant the Angels have a knowledge of it.

This knowledge is common to them all, because all of them are many times witnesses and accusers. Paul *chargeth Timothy before the Elect Angels, that he should observe the things committed to him*, 1 Tim. 5. 21. He doth not charge him before two or twenty, or any other determinate number, but before them all; because no reason can be assigned why any one should be included or excluded, more than another. Now what account should the Angels be able to give of *Timothy's* observing or not observing those things, if they neither see, hear, or know what *Timothy* doth? or if they see him sometimes, yet for the most part they see him not? Or what prudence I pray was it in *Paul* to write it, or what imprudence had it been in *Timothy* to laugh at it, if *Paul* or *Timothy* had believed, that the Angels know nothing of mans actions? But surely *Timothy* took it for no jesting matter.

Paul chargeth him *before the Elect Angels*. I fear, Gentle Reader, that thou shalt find at the hour of thy Death, that the Reprobate Angels will have seen, known, and noted

down more of thy life, than thou wouldst willingly see again, or wilt know how to answer to. It would be happy for thee, if thou couldst except against them, as being blind and deaf, alledging that thy actions were done in secret, in the dead of mid-night, under-ground, or close walls. Or if thou couldst mock them, as *Elias* did the gods of the false Prophets, saying, thou didst work, when they were talking with others or of other things, when they were upon a journey, or when they slept, 1 Kings 18. 27. Take heed, procure to live well, and trust not too much to frivolous Opinions. If a man may be frightened at his Death, to see the Devils, who are his enemies to accuse him, how great will the trouble be, when the Elect Angels, who are Christs friends shall oppose him? It will be a sad change, when the Angels, who by the Lords appointment, and their own inclination, were Protectors, Friends, and Guardians, shall for mans default and perverseness become his irreconcilable enemies, and accusers. The Saints also will joyn with them to accuse the wicked, as Christ saith, *Moses* shall do the Jews. Note the force of this Argument.

The *Jews* refused to receive Christ for the *Messias*, although they had so many evident signs before their eyes, that he was the man promised

promised in the Scriptures. This they did under pretence that they were the Disciples of *Moses*, *Ios* 9.28.& yet they would not believe what *Moses* had written of the *Messias*, *Ioh*. 5. 46. Christ told them, that he himself would not accuse them for it, but that *Moses* would accuse them, in whom they trust. *Ioh*. 5. 45. They knew that *Moses* in his life time had had so great an affection for them, that he had often defended them from the Lords wrath, and they still trusted in him that he would help them by his prayers and intercession. For the words in whom ye trust being in the present tense, they shew that the Jews confidence was yet in *Moses*, although he were then dead. But in lieu, saith Christ, of Praying, Interceding or pleading for them, he should accuse them. Certainly it will be a great eyesore and heart-break to the Jews to see *Moses* prove an enemy, whom they hoped to have found a constant friend. It is not probable, that *Moses* will accuse them upon hear-say, or bare relation only. Because in a Court of most exact Justice such an Accuser ought not to be heard, where the Sentence is to be given of death, eternal death, and where the principal that related it, may easily be found, produced, and made to bring in his evidence, Therefore he will charge them with what he can depose upon his own sight and knowledge.

Which he could never do, if he were ignorant of what is done in the world by them. As *Abraham* could never have told *Dives*, that *Moses* and the Prophets were in the world; seeing they were all of them born after *Abraham's* death, unless he had known what passed amongst the living.

Some may object, the Prophet *Isaiah*, when the people having immediate recourse unto the Lord, alledged that *Abraham* was ignorant of them and that *Israel* did not acknowledge them, *Isai.* 63. 16. It is to be noted, how they who presume to read the Bible much, understand it so little as to bring places for themselves which make point-blank against them, as this doth, which proves home to the purpose of my intent. The ignorance which the *Israelites* deplored to be in *Abraham* was a smart ignorance caused by their own fault, which made them more sensible of their sins, and cry out with greater feeling to the Lord for mercy, as being deprived of the Intercession, and help of so great a Protector as was their Father *Abraham*. It was such an ignorance as Parents have, when tired with the ingratitude of their Children, they first disinherit them, and then acknowledge them no more for theirs, not caring thence forward to hear or know what they do. So *Abraham* and *Israel* weary of the Jewish obstinacy,

nacy, but not being willing to accuse them, whom they had once cherished as their Children, thought fit not to acknowledge them any more, or remember them any longer. So they were ignorant, because they would be so. And the holy Text doth not say *he did not know them*, for he knew them well enough, but *He did not acknowledge them*. He would have nothing to do with a People, whom the Lord had cast off, and was so far from owning them for his own, that he would not permit any to speak for them, or treat of a Reconciliation with them. For the Lord forbade *Jeremiah* to pray for them, *Ier. 7. 16.* protesting that although *Moses* and *Samuel*, who were then dead, or *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*, who were yet living, should intercede for that undutiful generation he would give no more ear to them *because his Soul or affection was no more set upon that people*, *Ier. 11. 14. and 14. 12. and 15. 1.* If it had been possible the Lord also would not have known them.

What shall we say to the words which Christ useth to the foolish Virgins, *I know you not*? *Matt. 31. 14.* Wo to the Soul, to whom Christ shall say, *I know you not*. It were a silly thing to raise a Dispute upon these words, whether or no Christ see and know what men do. This ignorance, this non-knowledge of Christ argues a deep knowledge of the

unworthiness of those to whom he speaks. Every one useth to be known by his name. And they are truly known to Christ, whose names are written in the Book of life. Now because Christ desired to know all, he died for all, and left it in their power to apply the virtue of his death and merits unto themselves that if they pleased, they might all be registered therein. Which if they be careless to do, he will make it be seen in due time, that it is their negligence, not his fault, that they are not written there. When this life is ended, and Heaven Gate is once shut, then it may well be verified, that neither the Lord, Christ, the Angels, or Saints, do see, hear or know any of those that are without. For whosoever goes to hell, shall be in eternal oblivion before God, his Anointed, and all the Court of Heaven. A dreadful Sentence.

Dear Reader, let thy life be such, as that the Lord may be moved to command the Angels to do the same office to thee, as they did to *Lazarus*, that is, to carry thy Soul to a happy repose. If thou dislikest the condition, if thou standest yet stiff in thy opinion, that they neither know where thou art, nor how thou livest, nor when thou dyest; if thou neither carest for their help, nor dost value their anger, blame not them when thou givest up the Ghost, if they leave thee, and carry others.

Thrice

Thrice happy they that are carried thither. They shall all of them be *like unto the Angels*, Mat. 22. 30. For as much as belongs to the enjoying of God, and many of them again for as much as belongs to the treating with men. For as the Lord governed the world by the ministry of Angels before the coming of the *Messias*, as we find in the Old Testament: so Christ, upon whom all power is conferred, is pleased since his Ascension to make use of the Saints to perform the same Functions, as we have in the New. Because out of desire that he hath to honour humane nature, which he assumed, he rewards the Saints, *that shall overcome in the warfare of this life, with making them to God, Kings and Priests, that they may reign upon earth* Rev. 5. 10. *giving them power, to some over Cities*, Luk. 19. 17. *to others over Nations, that they may rule them with a rod of Iron*, Rev. 2. 26. *to others over many things*, Mat. 25. 21.

These and many other like passages of the holy Bible, cannot have a good and proper sense, unless the Saints, as well as the Angells, have a particular distinct knowledge of the manifold varieties of accidents that happen upon this earth. Authority to reign and rule gives right to them that have received such authority, to know the limits of their Power, to be informed of the nature of the people that are their Subjects, to understand what lan-

guage they speak, and under what Climate the City, Region, or place they govern, is situated. They must know the condition, state, and quality of the persons committed to their charge, how they behave themselves, whether they be inclined to vertue or to vice, whether easie or hard to be managed, and when it is requisite to use, when to spare the rod of Iron. And because this government is conferred upon the Saints by Christ, chiefly and directly for the spiritual, invisable help of their Subjects, and tends onely indirectly to the ease of their corporal necessities, it is necessary that the Saints should be as vigilant and watchful to protect and defend their Clients, as the Devil is busie to ruine them. Wherefore they must be able upon any recourse made unto them, in what time, place, or manner soever it be to hear their Subjects complaints or prayers, to grant their request, to redress their miseries, and to procure, if need be, Divine favours for them. As Instruments are necessary to a man that doth practise an Art, so are these things to the Saints that are to exercise immediate jurisdiction. He that makes the Saints blind, deaf, dumb, and ignorant, mistakes the Bible, and calls in question the fulness of Christs promise. He that ponders these things maturely, when he reads them in them in the Word of God, doubts not but

but that Christ is faithful, his sayings true, his rewards perfect, his gifts complete, his promise without repentance, and that he fulfils and performs it with entire satisfaction to the partie. Which if it be so, let every one confess that to believe that the Angels and Saints, hear, see, and know what is done in this lower earth, is well and solidly grounded in the Bible.

It is high time that we come to the chief point treated of in the 33 Chapter. It was there established and agreed upon, that all Honour and Glory ought to be given to the Lord alone, taking the word *All* and *alone* in their most proper and rigorous signification. Notwithstanding, to the end you may see that I shun not the difficulty, I will here confirm it more at large, by shewing first, what honour is, then to whom, and upon what title it can be due; from whence I will pass to answer plainly and fully the main Point.

These three Chapters are somewhat speculative; let those who fear them, turn them over, and go to the 40 Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVII.

What Honour is.

HONOUR is the fruit of an exterior increase, gotten by the dilating of his name, who being inwardly full, works for himself most admirable things outwardly. The declaration of this definition sufficeth to prove that true Honour can agree to none but the Lord alone.

A thing doth increase interiorly within itself, when there is received into it some new quality or vertue which it had not before. In which manner, God cannot increase, because his Essence being intrinsically full of all possible and imaginable excellencies, perfections, beauty, happiness, and the like, he can receive into himself no real entity which can make him greater or better. Man (the same is to be said of Angels) may increase interiorly, because his Essence being a pure nothing, and a meer vacuity of all good, he may continually receive into himself new actualities and forms, which may augment his perfection.

An

An exterior encrease is made by super-adding, to the essence some new thing, or some new *name*. God cannot increase by acquiring any new thing, because all things are his: but he may encrease by getting a new *name*, as by making the World he got the name of *Creator*, which he had not before.

The fruit of this increase is called *Honour*, and ought one'y to be gathered by him that is inwardly full of his own perfections. Because Honour is a Royal vest, that can only fit well upon a full essence. It stands with reason, that he, who is full inwardly should encrease outwardly.

Man, it is true, may encrease all these ways; but it is against right order, that he should encrease outwardly by honour, till his interior vacuities be filled with perfections. Which because it can never be done by reason of the infinite nulls that are in him, and by reason that whatsoever he hath, or can have, is none of his but Gods. Therefore honour appropriated to man, is a vain swelling, not a solid dilating; it is a massy Robe upon Infant shoulders, it is a fond fluttering with usurped feathers.

The *name* is identified with the thing: because according to Philosophers, *pradicatur in recto de re*. It is affirmed in the nominative case

case. Inſomuch as whatſoever is affirmed of the name, is affirmed of the thing it ſelf. And therefore when the Lords Name encreaſeth, the Lord himſelf is ſaid to encreaſe. And becauſe the name is not the Lord himſelf, but hath been impoſed upon him by men to ſignifie his intrinſecal eſſence or particular attributes (as the name *God*, *Creator*, is not his intrinſecal eſſence, nor intrinſecally in him) therefore becauſe the name is really out of him, the Lord by the encreaſe of his name, is ſaid to encreaſe outwardly.

This outward encreaſe is made by dilating the name, and the name is dilated when it paſſeth to the knowledge, eſteem, and repute that others have of him that is, or of him that works. It is greater or leſſer, as the knowledge and eſteem is in more or fewer, greater or leſſer. And he that hath no reputation at all, or an ill one, is ſaid to have no name at all, or an ill one.

A Name is of two kinds. The one is impoſed upon the thing at the firſt, to notify and diſtinguiſh the eſſence; the other is gotten afterwards by working. The firſt name represents and ſignifies a determinate nature, as it is planted it it ſelf, and as it is diſtinct from all others. ● the Name *God*, *Man*, *Heaven*, represents and ſignifies the nature and eſſence of theſe things, as they are con-

con-

constituted in themselves with all their essential and proper predicats, and as they are distinct from all others. And whatsoever is verified of this name, is verified of the thing, whose name it is, which can be said of nothing else beside, that is out of the essence.

The second Name is gotten by free working, which being added to the first name, encreaseth it, and makes it greater. True it is, that by reason of the abundant variety of free actions man may do, he may have divers names, as of just, liberal, magnanimous, prudent; but they are all comprehended under the second name. Upon this name doth alwaies attend praise or blame. Because every free action is praise or blame-worthy, and is the root of renown, glory, or ignominy.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

To whom, and upon what title Honour is due.

EXcellency, is an object obliging every one that looks upon it, to crown his name with honour, that is the proper Lord of the Excellency. The true Lord of it can be no other

other than God alone, seeing all excellency is either in God, or belongs to him. Whatsoever is in him, is natural and necessary, and therefore, although he ought to be honoured for it, yet honour joyned with praise and glory is due to him for those excellencies alone, that shine in his free producing most admirable works out of himself. He made all things to purchase this honour, as the crown of his Works. He was jealous of it, and reserved it for his own brow. But because to work for honour only is vanity, he made all things for profit also. Not for his own profit, because he can want nothing, but for mans good, who stands in need of all things. Man therefore is obliged to reap profit by creatures, that is, by the right use of them to encrease inwardly in perfection, and make God encrease outwardly by yielding him all the honour. For God comprehending from all eternity, that he could not be inwardly better, decreed to make himself in time outwardly greater. Therefore he filled all and every one of his works, with the effects of his wonderful power, wisdom, and goodness, and would be the sole principal agent of all that is vertuous, good, and laudable, to the end that his Name alone might be dilated, hallowed, sanctified, and crowned with honour, admiration, praise, and

and glory, by all created understandings, wills and tongues, Whosoever appropriates any of this honour to himself, or gives it with appropriation to any other, bereaves the Lord of his external Diadem, and Traitor-like sets it upon his own, or upon some other empty brow, that proudly and vainly presumes to usurp the dignity of a Godhead.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Honour can by no title be due to Men, Angels, or any other creature.

ONe may say, that the two roots, which make honour due, are both of them in man, because he is indued with multiplicity of noble talents, and produceth a great number of excellent actions, I answer, that they are so: but that neither of them is sufficient to make it lawful to give unto him the honour that ought to sprout from them. The same is to be said of the Angels.

The first doth not suffice, because whatsoever excellency is in man, it is wholly the Lords work. No man can boast that he hath any, which he hath not received, and which
without

without any injury done him may not be taken again from him. Therefore he cannot pretend to be honoured for an excellency that is none of his. If you say the Lord bestowed it upon him, and therefore it is his. I answer, that he bestowed upon him the use, not the propriety. And this use is so his, that he is not licenced to use and abuse it at his pleasure, but he is obliged to use it according to the divine will. Which if he do, he performs but his duty; if he do it not, he may fear chastisement.

The same reason proves that the second root doth not suffice. For although man does many heroical actions, yet upon due reflexion of what the Lord might have expected from him, he will happily be ashamed to consider how by his tepidity and negligence the action is disfigured, obscured and spoiled. But let us grant that he wrought with the utmost of his forces, ability and power, yet it is not possible for him to arrive higher than to obtain the name of an *unprofitable Servant*. And if he would presume to stretch forth his hand to catch at honour for it, he would deserve to be branded with the infamous name of *Prond*, and to be thrown out of the Lords favour, as *Lucifer* was out of Heaven. Now to the main point.

CHAP. XL.

*How, and why honour may be given to Men,
Angels, or Saints, without prejudice of giving
All Honour to the Lord.*

THe difficulty ariseth from the words of the Lord, saying by the Prophet: *I will not give my glory or honour to any other.* Isa. 42. 8. Because, *To God alone all honour and glory,* 1 Tim. 1. 17.

To understand the Text right, you must note that the word *to give*, may be taken two wayes. The one is in a strict, proper, and rigorous sense, when by vertue of giving the Receiver is made absolute Lord and Master of the thing given: As when one gives you a Jewel, he transfers upon you the dominion of it, so that you may dispose of it at your pleasure, without being accountable to any man for it. In this sense the Lord speaks, as is manifest out of the precedent words of the same verse, *I am the Lord, that is my name*: that is to say. I alone am, and will be the Lord of honour and glory, and I

will have no Lord of it but my self, and therefore I will not give it to any other.

There is another imperfect way of giving, when the thing given is not put directly into the true owners hand, but into another mans hand to be delivered to the right owner of it. By vertue of such an indirect giving, the Receiver is not made Lord of the thing given, but contracts an obligation to deliver it to the true and lawful Owner. This obligation is grounded in the cause, that moved the Giver, and in our case it is indispensable. In this sense the Lord is content, and commands in many places of the Bible, that honour be given to such as co-operate with him to the producing of certain works that deserve honour, that by their means it be returned to him. A familiar example will make it clear.

One gives you a Letter, Petition, Bill or Memorial to be presented to the Kings most Excellent Majesty. This Bill or Memorial is given to you by a very improper manner of giving, it being properly and in rigour to be given to the King. It is only committed to your fidelity to give it, and you by receiving it contract an obligation to deliver it, and may be called in question for it, if you omit to do it. If the office or profit of such Bills belongs to you, you may justly expect, that

that they be put into your hands, but you cannot pretend that they are yours, or that you have right to detain them, or to suppress them, or otherwise to dispose of them. In this imperfect manner we may give a certain kind of honour to Men, Angels, and Saints, and they may receive it, and expect it should be given them. Yet they can have no title to have or to hold it, but they are charged with an obligation to return it entire unto the Lord.

I said *a certain kind of honour*, that is, such an honour as is due unto the Lord for created excellencies. Because the honour, that is due unto him for the increated, is an honour that is called *Divine*, of which the Lord is so jealous, that he will not permit any part thereof to be communicated in any manner to creatures. He will not allow of so much as a simple thought, that a creature can have any divine excellency in it: much less will he approve of a settled will to kneel or bow to it. But when the excellencies are created, then you may and ought to give honour in the imperfect manner aforesaid, to the person that hath them.

For although all men are equal in their birth as being equally born naked, yet they are not afterwards equally dignified alike, some of them being determined by the Lord.

In the order of nature to be Kings, Commanders, Magistrates, and meaner Officers; others again being called by the same Lord in the order of Grace, to be Bishops, Prelates, Pastors, and the like; others in a more sublime way to be Instruments and furtherers of his spiritual charge, in which number are the Angels and Saints, and she above them all, who holds by the title of Gods Maternity. These favours as they raise the persons favoured to a very notable eminency, so they oblige all others to testify by an exterior act of capping, bowing, kneeling, &c. their interior approbation of the Lords pleasure in exalting them, rather then others. For whosoever gives Honour to the Creature, must do it with an actual, virtual, or habitual intention to Honour the Lord, not with a formal will, to have it rest there. And whosoever receives it, must immediately send it to the Lord for whose sake it is given him. Otherwise he is disloyal to man, and treacherous to the Lord: to man, because he betrays the trust that man put in him; to the Lord, because he defrauds him of the Honour sent him.

Wherefore they deserve much to be compassionate, who are placed in great office, dignity, or superiority. Because on the one side they are obliged to receive Honour, otherwise they cannot return it to the Lord; on the other

other side they must beware of it, because Honour is an edged tool, which the Lord will not have them to handle; it is a sweet that he will not have them taste of, it is a perfume that he will not have them smell to, it is a Coin that must not be clipped, but returned whole and entire into his Exchequer. Whosoever prevaricates in this kind, shall be impeached for *Proud*, and proceeded against as Traitors to the external Scepter of Heavens Sovereign.

The Holy Bible layes before our eyes the incomparable example of the B. Virgin *Mary*, as a most perfect pattern how to return Honour to the Lord.

S. Elizabeth, by instinct of the Holy Ghost, having honoured the Virgin *Mary* with the title of *Mother of the Lord*, and being astonished at the humble visit she made to her inferior, pronounced her *Blessed amongst women*, *Luk. 1.42.* with a blessedness that was never yet communicated to any but her alone, seeing no other ever had, or ever should have such a blessed fruit, as she bore in her womb. The Virgin admitted of the Honour, which she could not refuse without prejudice of Truth, that spoke by the tongue of *Elizabeth*. But without detaining it one single moment, she dispatched it presently to the Lord. *And Mary said, my Soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my Spi-*

rit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour, Luk. 1. 46. Behold, how not she, but the Lord is magnified, and that not with words onely, but with *Heart and Soul*. She admits no joy, but what is spiritual, and her Spirit rejoyceth in God alone. Who although as her Son he be imprisoned in her womb, yet as God, he is her peculiar Saviour. She goes forward, acknowledging that from her self she hath nothing, but that it is the Omnipotent that hath wrought great things in her; and therefore not the Hand-maid but the Name of the Lord ought to be exalted, hallowed and sanctified. Her whole Canticle is a most humble Document to instruct us, how that honour which with reason is given to Creatures for the noble works which the Lord hath wrought in and by them, ought not to rest in Creatures, but be transferred to the Lord of it and them. And so the Lord receives a double honour.

For as he, to whom a present is sent, is far more esteemed than he that carries it; so the Lord to whom all Honour is finally directed, is much more Honoured, then Men or Angels, who have onely charge to deliver it. Yea, as it cannot be denied, but that the greater worth and Nobility of the carrier, makes the present more grateful, so it must needs be granted, that Honour is most acceptable unto the Lord, when it is presented him

him by the Hand of his best friends, and greatest favourites.

CHAP. XLIV.

Why Angels and Saints ought rather to be honoured then Men.

OUt of what hath been said, it is easie to gather, that honour may be more securely committed to Saints and Angels, then to mortal men. Because men by reason of their ignorance, blindness, passion, self-love, vehement temptation, and other frailties in corrupt natures, are subject to apply to themselves the sweet that is felt in receiving Honour. Whereas the Saints and Angels have such a clear knowledge of their own insufficiency and weakness, and of the Lords Power, Worth, and Dignity, that it is not possible for them to receive any praise which they should not presently make pass to their Creator.

The Virgin *Mary*, as she surpasseth all in being exalted to the superexcellent dignity of the Mother-hood of God, so she exceeds them all in the perfect discovery of her own baseness, and the Lords dreadful greatness.

This supernatural ray of divine light withhold her from arrogating to her self any the least parcel of the incomparable Enconiums, or exaggerated praise, which all learned and pious ages have bequeathed unto us, as lively testimonies of the desire they had to honour her. And no man did ever fear, that any of them should stick by her, who with humble gratitude makes them all stream to increase the Honour, Praise and Glory of God the Fountain.

Because I have mentioned the Virgin *Mary*, and because this Treatise may come into the hands of some that have been brought up with a mean conceit of her; I will briefly lay down some Motives, drawn out of the Bible, upon which the Religion of Christ relies, when it attributes honour to her.

CHAP. XLII.

Reasons out of the Bible for Honour given to the Virgin Mary.

THE Virgin *Mary* is the true Mother of God. This Title alone doth raise her above all created greatness. The highest Cherubin or Seraphin dares presume no more, then

then to be servant of the Lord. She is invested with the title of Mother, and of such a Mother, as still remains a Virgin. Because it was convenient that no other than a Virginal womb should bring forth a God-head. An Arch-Angel was sent from Heaven with express instructions to declare her *Blessed*. The tenour of his Embassy was dictated by the Holy Ghost, and set down word by word in the Holy Bible. *Hail full of Grace, the Lord is with thee, Blessed art thou among Women*, Luk. 1.28. *Hail*, because saluted from the sacred Trinity, and elected to an incomprehensible dignity. *Full of Grace*, because alwayes free from sin, and abounding in Original Justice. *The Lord is with thee*, because he possessed thee in the first instant of thy being. *Blessed art thou among women*, because thou hast received a Prerogative above them all. The Arch-Angel *Gabriel* denounced this Blessing to her in private, but *Elizabeth* by instinct of the Holy Ghost proclaimed it in the same words in publick, giving notice thereof to the whole world. *And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women*. Luk. 1.42. Not only blessed in thy self, but blessed also for the *blessed fruit of thy womb*: blessed for thy Faith, blessed for the promises made to thee, and blessed *because those things shall be performed and accomplished, which have been*

spoken to thee. The blessed Virgin inspired by the same Holy Ghost declared openly, what the Lord had spoken to her in secret, (*viz.*) *That all Generations shall call her blessed.* Luk. 1.48. This Propheſie began immediately to be fulfilled. The Apoſtles enacted it for an Article of Faith, that ſhe is ſtill a Virgin, and that ſhe enjoys the unmatched bleſſing of Virginitie and Fecundity. All faithful ſubjects of Chriſts Religion ſubmitted to it. The Primitive Fathers, the *Æcumenical Councils*, the Doctors of the Church the ſpeculative Divines, all Contemplatives, all Maſters in Spirit, all Chriſtian Hiſtoriographers, and all that have managed a Pen favouring of Sanctitie, have left Learned and Pious Monuments of the tribute of Praises, that have been paid to her worth. No man who hath read Authors can deny this. Gentle Reader, if thou knoweſt any man that makes profeſſion to have read them, charge his Conſcience, whoſoever he be, with this my ſaying, and he muſt be more then impudent if he will deny it. But if thou doſt meet with ſome one that bears ſuch ſmall reſpect to Chriſt, that even againſt moſt palpable truth, he is forward to cloud the name of Chriſts Mother, I am ſorry that thou canſt not read them thy ſelf. For I aſſure thee, thou ſhouldeſt find more devout, ſweet, tender expreſſions of admiration, Love, and Praise

Praise of the glorious Virgin *Mary*, which could not be written, but by Pens dipped in the Spirit of Truth and Piety, seeing that whilst they carry the praises of the Mother aloft, they tend to the exaltation of the Son Christ Jesus.

But why she more blessed then other women? Because all other women carry along with them the Original Curse, she alone is pronounced *Blessed*, as never having incurred any Original stain. Because it being established in the Divine Law, that *she should crush his head*, that first infected the Root of Mankind, *Gen. 3. 15.* it had been preposterous, that the Serpent should first have squeezed her. And seeing she was to be Mother to the Son, by vertue of whose Merits she was to crush Satan, it was absolutely convenient, that she should enjoy by privilege, what was due to her Son by Nature. For it is an established Maxim in Imperial and Royal Courts, that in privileges the Spouse doth participate with the Sovereign. *Hester*, because she was Queen, was exempted from the rigorous Edict of Death, that was Proclaimed against all. *Hest. 13. 13.* In like manner the fatal Decree of Original Death, which passed against all the posterity of *Adam*, was not to include the B. Virgin *Mary*, seeing she was to be Queen of Heaven, and the Daughter, Mother, and Spouse of God. Her

Her peculiar blessing consisted in that, which the Royal Psalmist speaks of her in a mystical sense. *Deus qui precinxit me virtute, et posuit immaculatam viam meam*, Psal. 17. 35. *God who girded me with a preventing virtue or grace, and laid my way immaculate.* It was the Omnipotent virtue of God, that prevented her, it was his Grace that filled her, it was his Love that paved the way, his Purity that freed it from spot, and it was his Merits that made the way *Hers*. It was truly *her way*. For she alone and no other did ever tread it. She was so lovely and gracious in her passage over it, that the words of the Spouse are rightly applied unto her. *Thou art all beautiful and fair, and there is no spot or blemish in thee*, Cant. 4. 7. This is the first instant of her being, Who shall declare what the last of her Life was?

It is not possible for humane capacity to comprehend how excellent and rare a creature she was, when she ascended triumphant to heaven. For seeing that one dram of Grace doth more adorn the Soul then all natural lustre can do, who shall conceive what beauty shined in her, that was enriched with a plenitude of grace in the first moment of her immaculate Conception? She was in that first instant full of Grace, yet notwithstanding she got every instant following

a new increase : For every moment she got a new depth by an humble sinking down into her own nothing , and a new largeness of heart by a continual dilating of her charity. So that every moment she was full, and every moment she had need of the Holy Ghost to be filled. Thus she went encreasing in splendor and beauty all the dayes of her life, without any the least ecclipse, diminution or wane of her graces, till being accomplished in perfection befitting the dignity she was to bear in heaven, she rendred up her pure spirit into the hands of her Lord, her Son, and her Redeemer.

Therefore the Religion that speaks honourably of her, is warranted by the Bible. But the Religion that speaks ill of her, doth evidently dishonour Christ. For to vilifie the Mother, is to disparage the Son. To make light of the Virgin *Mary*, is to tax the love of Christ that chose her, and the power that made her. Christ loved Man, and love made him choose a Mother, and he chose *Her*. It were very strange, that love should make him choose her, and yet he should not love her. It were yet more strange, that loving her, and judging her fit to be his Mother, he should think it unfit to frame her perfect, or to bestow upon her the prerogatives, graces and favours, that ought to attend upon Gods Mother.

Mother. I appeal to all dutiful Children to tell me, what a rare kind of Creature they would make their own Mother, if it lay in their power to do it. *Solomon* placed his Mother *Bersabee* upon his own Throne. And I believe that none of *Solomon's* Subjects durst ever say that it was above her desert, or that she did not become it. Christ commands us to honour our Parents, and he came into the world to give us example. We shall argue what he did, by considering what was convenient to be done.

It was in the hand of the Wisdom and power of Christ to frame his own Mother according to the proportion of the love he bore her. The incomparable Title of Gods Maternity did require that his love should command his wisdom to invent, and his power to execute what might stand with the reputation of the Mother of an Incarnate God. Therefore it was necessary that he should use them both, to enrich her with such resplendent qualities that she might out-shine the Subjects of his Realm; to adorn her with such matchless excellencies, that no Peer in Heaven might pretend to sit above her; to plant upon her cheek such excellent beauty, that she might grace the Throne, in which she is seated, and reflect a glorious honour upon Christ her Son, who is the spring of her splendor,

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I conclude the whole Treatise thus. That Religion must certainly be no member of Christs Kingdom, which to maintain the Honour of Christ, endeavours to censure his Mothers credit. Satan and his adherents, as they hate Christ, so they exceed in rage and malice against his Mother. And therefore it is to be presumed that the Religion sides with them, which labors to depress *Her*.

CHAP. XLVIII.

The Seeker to the Reader.

I Have passed the bounds of my intended brevity. My intention was, Gentle Reader, rather to stir thee up to hear others, than read me. For thou wilt receive greater satisfaction from the lively voice of Learned men, then from the bare reading of dead lines. Men are not wanting to give thee instruction, if thou beest not backward to demand information. Whilst time is be not careless : if time pass there is no return. Where the tree falls, there it shall lye. Thy soul lyes at stake, and Eternity expects thee. Happy shalt thou be, if thou arrivest to enjoy the Lord. Otherwise, woe, and woe.

Do

Do not die with a false persuasion that ignorance of the True Religion may excuse thee. Fear rather least in the hour of thy death Christ may say to thee who art his by the title of a Christian, what the Lord said to the Jews, at the time when they were his elected and chosen people. *Thou dost still erre in thy heart, and thou hast not known my wayes, Harken what follows and tremble : I have sworn to thee in my anger, that thou shalt not enter inter into the rest*, Prov. 25. v. 10. 11. *that is prepared for the Blessed.* Seek therefore the true way; Seek Jesus Christ, and his Religion. Seek sincerely, and thou shalt find securely.

FINIS.

